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SHINE ON.

BY E. J. O.

Shine on, fair star, and shed thy light,
From realms afar, upon the night!
Shine o'er the tryst beneath the hill,
Where, all alone, I linger still!
Thy silv'ry beam is dear to me,
Its trembling light I love to see,
For on our path it softly fell,
When lips sigh'd forth the last farewell!

Shine on! shine on! and light the way,
For one I wait from day to day;
He lingers long, but well I know
He loves me now as years ago!

Shine on, fair star, for once again
He homeward sails across the main!
The breezes say his bark is near,
O light the way and guide him here!
I know that he can ne'er forget,
In loneliness I wait him yet;
I know that o'er the pathless sea,
He brings his heart unchanged to me!

Fettered, Yet Free.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LIKE UNTO A STAR," "BRUNA'S STORY," "A GIRL'S DESPAIR," "TWICE MARRIED," ETC., ETC.

PROLOGUE.

IT was raining steadily. The rain fell in a heavy downpour, as if it had not rained for weeks or months, and had long arrears to make up, although the state of the country roads testified silently, but eloquently, that such was not the case, by their depth of wet mud and slush.

It was a lonely, hilly district; lovely perhaps in the height of the summer, when the hills, with the sunlight upon them, stood out boldly against the blue sky, and the fields were golden with the ripening corn; but in the winter, in the bad weather, in weather such as this, there was an air of desolation which lingered in the wind, even when the spectator was far away from the gray, misty bleakness of the Welsh landscape.

In the summer too it was frequented by artists and tourists; a couple of coaches ran daily over the rough uneven roads to the nearest town, and girls, in coquettish hats and dainty gowns, might be met on the hills, and artists' sketching umbrellas were dotted here and there like huge mushrooms, and in the hotels in the valley every room was full and the table d'hote crowded.

But there was no table d'hote now, and the rooms were shut up till the summer came again, and the one visitor to the little settlement in the valley, an artist, studying a winter sunset, felt himself rather solitary and "Robinson Crusoe-ish."

It was on a day late in autumn that the rain fell so heavily; the summits of the hills were enveloped in a thick, dense mist; here and there on the hills an adventurous sheep sheltered itself under an overhanging boulder, the only living thing in the landscape, except a horseman, who rode as fast as the heavy ground would allow him over the rough road between the little village in the valley and the nearest town—if town it might be called—of Llanarvon.

The clock in the steeple of the old church which stood at the entrance of the little town was striking eleven as he rode into the roughly-paved street, which was the only one of any importance of which Llanarvon boasted, and which led to a kind of square on the hill top, where the markets were held round a roughly-carved stone cross of great antiquity. Overlooking the square were two or three inns, some of the best shops, and three or four houses of a better class than the majority of the buildings in the town, and these were inhabited by the gentry of Llanarvon—i. e., the doctor, the lawyer, the lawyer's father, and one or two others who from old association clung to the little town and did not care to leave it.

There was no one to be seen in the steep, irregular street as the drenched and mud-bespattered horseman rode up it, slackening his speed a little in compassion to his distressed mount.

One or two woman looked at him over the blinds of their cottage windows; a child, attracted by the sound of the horse's hoofs, came and looked after his retreating figure from over the little gate which barred its egress from the cottage door, but he met no one who could give him the information he sought.

He rode on until he came to the first inn, where he drew up, and without alighting, uttered a rather imperative summons, which he was obliged to repeat before it received any reply; then a brisk, dark-eyed, little Welsh-woman appeared on the threshold of the open door.

"Where does the doctor live?"

The question was spoken so abruptly, without being preceded by any greeting, that the little woman colored with something like annoyance.

"Which doctor?" she said coldly, looking rather contemptuously at her questioner, whose undress livery was mud-stained and dripping with moisture, and who was not easily recognised as a usually smartly-attired gentleman's groom.

"There surely can't be more than one in this hole?" he said contemptuously, smarting a little under her disdainful dark eyes.

"There is however," she replied coldly. "There's Doctor Price and Doctor Lewis."

"Which is the best?" the groom said sharply,—"or the nearest?"

"Well Doctor Lewis is nearly ninety, and has left off seeing sick people, so I reckon you had better go to Doctor Price," she said demurely.

"Where does he live?"

"Who wants him?" replied the innkeeper's wife inquisitively.

"My master," the groom answered sharply. "Tell me where he lives, can't you? It's a matter of life and death."

"He lives in the stone house with ivy, almost opposite the market cross," she replied quickly. "You'll find him in, I daresay; he does not leave home until half-past eleven."

The servant touched his hat sulkily as he rode away, and in two minutes was ringing lustily at the surgery door of the house, which bore on a shining brass plate the name, "Evan Price, M. R. C. S."

A boy of about sixteen opened it promptly.

"Is the doctor in?" said the groom hastily.

"Yes. Who wants him?" returned the youth, looking very important.

"My master—Mr. Beaumont."

"Is it important?"

"Rather," retorted the servant. "He's had some kind of fit, and my orders were to bring the doctor back as fast as ever I could."

"Where is it?"

"The Glen House, near Llantiglo."

"Phew!" whistled the dispenser. "That's nigh upon ten miles."

"I didn't say it was not," said the groom impatiently. "Just go and tell your master, there's a good lad; there's no time to lose, I reckon."

The boy disappeared, and for two minutes the servant stood waiting, his horse's bridle over his arm, the rain still falling steadily, pattering on the uneven pavement and on the old stone cross rising in the centre of the market-place. Even to the groom's unimaginative mind there was something eerie and desolate in the empty square in which the silence was only broken by the falling rain, and in which no living thing was visible save himself and his horse, and the figure of the inquisitive little Welsh woman, in her short blue skirt.

"Well, my man, what is it?" said a clear, pleasant voice, breaking in upon the groom's meditations; and the man turned with a little start, and made a hasty salutation.

"It is my master, sir," he said respectfully, for there was something both impressive and pleasant in the appearance of the surgeon. "He was at breakfast with my mistress, when he fell down in a kind of fit; and Mr. Horrocks—the butler, sir—told me to ride for the nearest doctor as fast as I could."

"Who is your master?"

"Mr. Beaumont, sir, at the Glen House, near Llantiglo. We're strangers in these parts, sir; but you may have heard tell of my master."

"Yes, I have heard of him," said Doctor Price, who was hastily buttoning his waterproof riding coat and pulling on his riding gloves. "My horse will be brought round immediately, and I will go with you. I have just to leave word with Mrs. Price where I am going. I suppose there is no time for you to dry yourself?"

"I'm afraid not, sir. It don't matter much. We've got used to the rain since we came here."

The doctor smiled as he turned away, and presently a neat maidservant brought out a cup of steaming hot coffee, which the groom drank with grateful appreciation, and five minutes later he and the doctor were clattering over the stony street together.

They rode on in silence, passing the old church, where the hands of the clock in the tower marked the quarter past eleven; out of the little town on to the rough high road, where the horses ploughed heavily through the mud, and the swiftness of their speed was necessarily slackened.

But, if Doctor Price had been silent, his thoughts had been busy. He was recalling all he had heard of the man to whose assistance he had been summoned, and details which had attracted little attention from the busy surgeon, came back to him now.

Mr. Beaumont, he had been told, was a middle-aged man of great wealth, who had suddenly, and apparently without reason, closed his great house near one of our largest and wealthiest midland cities, and retired to the Glen House, a lonely mansion in the heart of the Welsh hills, which had been built at considerable expense by a young nobleman, who had soon wearied of its seclusion and had left it for years untenanted.

It was not a desirable habitation, certainly, although in the summer the views from its windows were beautiful; it was several miles from a railway station, there was no other house of its class in the neighborhood, it was four miles from Llantiglo, and ten, as we have seen, from Llanarvon, and that anyone, unless for old association's sake, should wish to take up their abode there seemed incredible.

Of Mr. Beaumont's wealth there was no doubt; his establishment was a large one, he kept a large number of horses, yet he entertained no visitors, and he and his wife were rarely seen beyond the limits of their own grounds.

Report and gossip, which are never so busy as in such small communities as Llantiglo and Llanarvon, had been very busy about the Glen House and its occupants.

Its master's wealth was said to be fabulous, while Mrs. Beaumont's beauty was declared to be almost supernatural. Other reports of a less pleasant character had reached Doctor Price; reports of a jealous husband who made his wife's life a burden by his jealousy and suspicion, of a young giddy wife rebelling against her bondage and beating her wings against the bars of her gilded cage, with vain cries of grief and anger and reproach.

Doctor Price was too true a gentleman to pry into other people's affairs by means of their servants, but still he felt that it behoved him to know something more of the patient he was going to see.

"Your master's illness was very sudden, I suppose?" he said, breaking the silence, as they rode slowly up a steep portion of the road; and the groom, relieved by this breaking of the long, and, to him, very oppressive silence, turned readily to his interlocutor.

"Very sudden, sir! Master paid his usual visit to the stables this morning and seemed in his usual health," he answered.

"He enjoys good health, then?" queried the surgeon, gently touching his horse's neck with his gloved hand, as the poor animal climbed the hill.

"He's never ailed nothing since I have been in his service, sir."

"And have you been in his service long?"

"More than two years, sir! I came to him just before he married."

"He is a good master?"

There was the slightest possible hesitation in the man's manner as he replied, a hesitation so slight that only a keen observer like Doctor Price would have noticed it.

"It is a very good place, sir," said the groom quietly; "good wages, and not too much to do, otherwise——"

He paused, and the surgeon looked at him questioningly.

"Otherwise?" he said quietly.

"Otherwise we should not have come to this dull place, sir, where there is nothing to do all the evening, and nothing going on," concluded the groom moodily, as he looked at the dreary landscape, hemmed in by hills, through which they were passing. "It's enough to make a man take to drink, that it is!"

"Well, I've lived in it for over twenty years, and I've not taken to drink yet," said the surgeon pleasantly. "There are worse places than the Welsh hills, my friend! You must have plenty of leisure to read, and improve yourself."

The groom shrugged his wet shoulders gloomily; reading and improving himself were not much in his line, he thought. The rain still fell heavily, coming down in a straight down pour; it was too dreary a morning to appreciate the Welsh hills.

"Does your master intend to winter here?" the surgeon asked presently.

"I'm blest if I know, sir!" responded the groom moodily. "I haven't heard anything to the contrary, and he won't consult our pleasure, you may be sure; nor the mistress's either, for that matter," he added, under his breath.

"Your mistress does not like Llantiglo, then?" the surgeon said, glancing at him with a little smile.

"Is it likely sir? My mistress is quite young,—there's more than twenty years between her and my master they say,—and she is fond of pleasure, as all young things are! Why, at Binchester she was always enjoying herself, and when we were in London for three weeks, about eighteen months ago, she was out every night to three or four balls and parties!"

"Perhaps she is glad of a rest?" suggested the surgeon, smiling at the man's aggrieved tone.

"Perhaps she is, sir, but she don't look

like it," replied the groom quietly, and there was another silence as they rode up hill under the steadily falling rain.

"Your master has had no illness since you entered his service then?" said Doctor Price presently.

"No, sir."

"Then he is not subject to fits, I presume?"

"Bless you, no sir, not he. He's a strong man, and Mr. Horrocks, who has lived in his service this twenty years, says he has never known him to have a day's illness."

"Is he a stout man?"

"No, sir; he's about your weight, I reckon."

"And what is my weight?" asked the surgeon smiling.

"About eleven stone six, sir, as far as I can judge."

"You're not far out," said Doctor Price with a nod and a smile, and they rode on more swiftly now, dashing through the little village of Llantiglo with a clatter which awakened the silent echoes.

Twenty minutes later they turned in at the open gates of the grounds of Glen House, and Doctor Price looked about him with some curiosity; he had not been within the precincts of those gates for over a year, and he saw in a moment how vast a change had taken place in them.

Then they had been uncared for and neglected, now it was evident that skill and care had been brought to bear upon them, and that money had not been spared. The lodges on either side of the entrance were tenanted by careful tenants; smart muslin blinds covered the shining window panes, the little gardens were ablaze with late autumn flowers, blossoming in profusion; the drive was carefully kept, and when the house itself came in sight, it had a very different appearance to that it had worn so long.

Rich curtains draped the windows, and through the wide hall doors could be seen the richly-furnished entrance hall. There were Turkish rugs on the polished floors, and rich-hued portieres over the doorways, which made a prevailing glow of warmth and coloring, which, however, did not prevent a certain air of desolation and forlornness which struck the doctor with a sense of ill.

There was no one to be seen as they alighted, but as Doctor Price walked up the broad stone steps, and the groom led away the steaming horses, a grave-looking, middle-aged man came from one of the rooms opening into the hall, and advanced towards him.

"You are the doctor, sir?" he said in a tone of mingled questioning and relief; "I am glad to see you. You have had a disagreeable ride, I am afraid; but the necessity is urgent."

"I am used to long, rough rides, in worse weather than this," the surgeon replied as the man, with grave courtesy, assisted him to remove his wet riding coat. "I hope I can be of service to Mr. Beaumont. I think I gathered from the messenger," he went on, pulling off his wet driving gloves with difficulty as they clung to his hands, "that he had had a fit of some kind. He is not subject to them, I suppose?"

"No, sir. I have lived with him for thirty years, and have never known him have anything of the kind before."

"He has not been ailing?"

"No, sir. He appeared in his usual health when he came downstairs this morning, and he and my mistress were at breakfast when he was taken ill!"

"I will go to him at once, if you please," Doctor Price said quietly, as he threw his gloves upon a table; and with a grave bow the butler preceded him across the hall, lifted a portiere, pushed open the door it concealed, and drawing slightly back to allow the surgeon to enter, followed him into the room.

A strange silence reigned in the apartment as they entered it, and the butler closed the door upon them; but intense as the stillness was, there were several persons in the room gathered round a sofa drawn up to one side of the great blazing coal fire.

The room was large, lofty, and well-proportioned, lighted by two large windows, looking on to a lawn and flower-garden; it was handsomely furnished as a dining-room, and the table was laid with an abundant and elaborate breakfast, the china and silver being of the costliest description; in the centre of the glistening damask a low glass dish, full of hothouse flowers, gave forth rather a powerful fragrance.

Doctor Price, glancing at it as he crossed the room, paused for a moment, and speaking to one of the servants grouped round the couch, desired her to remove the flowers from the room, then, passing on, gave his attention to the patient.

He was a man of five-and-forty, or thereabouts, with regular features and dark curling hair, stalwart in build, and of great personal beauty. He was ghastly pale, and quite unconscious; one glance, even from an inexperienced person would have shown that, but Doctor Price's grave expression deepened into anxiety as his eyes rested upon him, and, promptly putting aside the attendants, he bent over the motionless figure, and touched the livid brow, and clenched hands, and pulseless heart.

For some minutes, while he proceeded with his examination, a deep and profound silence filled the room, and when the surgeon raised his head his face was almost as pale as that which lay motionless and calm against the crimson velvet of the cushions of the couch.

"It is too late," he said, in a low, impressive tone. "I can do nothing; he is dead!"

A low, hoarse cry followed the words; a woman who had been standing at the foot of the couch, reeled slightly backward, and caught at the marble mantel-shelf for support.

The doctor glanced at her, and even in that moment was struck by her wonderful, statuesque, blonde beauty, the whiteness of her skin, the massive proportions of her superb figure.

Startled by her movement, he was about to advance towards her to offer his assistance, when the butler's trembling hand upon his arm arrested his steps.

"Can you do nothing, sir?" he said tremulously.

"Nothing," the surgeon replied. "Your master is dead."

"Was it a fit, sir?"

"No."

The woman who had uttered the little cry seemed to have recovered her emotion. She stood erect again, and was looking at the surgeon with wide, glittering blue eyes.

"Was it heart disease?" the butler continued, the trouble and anxiety on his face deepening with every passing moment.

"No," repeated Doctor Price very gravely.

The man's trembling hand fell from the doctor's arm.

"Perhaps you cannot state the cause of death, sir," he said—after a moment's silence, a look of relief at the thought crossing his face—"until you have made an examination?"

Doctor Price paused for a moment ere he replied; the beautiful blue eyes glancing in the marble pallor of the beautiful, statuesque face of the listening woman, had never relaxed their fixed, eager stare.

"There will have to be an examination of course," he said slowly. "I will make the necessary arrangements at once, and then ——"

"Until you have made it you cannot tell the cause of death?"

The interruption came with startling abruptness, the tones of the woman's voice which spoke were sharp and strained, but quite calm, the speaker's blue eyes were fixed with a soul-searching gaze on the surgeon's troubled face.

"I did not say that," he said quietly, meeting that look with grave, compassionate pity in his own glance.

"You know the cause?"

He bowed his head.

"Yes," he said gravely. "I know the cause."

A moment's silence ensued; the marble pallor of her face had intensified until she was white as snow. Every eye in the room was fixed upon her and Doctor Price; in the stillness the swish of the heavy rain driven against the windows by the angry wind was distinctly audible; both wind and rain had greatly increased during the last half hour.

Twice in the few minutes of silence she endeavored to speak; twice the stiff white lips refused to obey her; when the words came at last, her voice had lost its calmness.

"Was the cause of death poison?" she asked hoarsely.

The surgeon started, looked at her keenly, and then bowed his head in grave reply.

"It was poison?" she repeated, but this time her voice was so low that it was only by the movement of her lips that he guessed the words, for they did not reach as far as his ears.

Gravely and solemnly, in clear tones, which, low as they were, sounded distinctly through the quiet room, he answered her question.

"It was poison," he said.

CHAPTER I.

"THEN you have decided on nothing as yet?"

"On nothing," was the answer, spoken in a weary, spiritless tone, as if the dreariness of the time and place had taken from the speaker all joy and pleasure of existence.

It was very dreary. Outside, the gray February dusk was gathering, the evening of a day which had been foggy and cold and wet and miserable, was drawing near, and the fog and cold and damp seemed to have intensified with every passing hour until they had culminated in as wretched an evening as could be imagined. The lights of the river shone dimly, the London sounds, softened by distance, made a dull, rambling noise in the sitting-room of a quiet hotel on the Embankment, where two persons were sitting in the dying light, with grave faces and wearied looks.

Their interview had been a long one: there had been much to discuss and arrange, and some of the arrangements had been painful ones, but they had been made with the business-like exactitude and clear-headedness which characterized all Mr. Bevan's actions, and they were over. Neatly tied and docketed papers testified that the afternoon had been a busy one, even more than the wearied looks of the old lawyer and his companion.

The room was as dreary and uninteresting as sitting-rooms in quiet family hotels usually are, and it was only relieved from intense gloom by the cheerful coal-fire burning in the grate. Two large windows, shabbily draped in green damask, overlooked the Embankment, where the lights gleamed feebly through the fog.

There was tea in a rather antiquated service on a small table near the fire, and of the three cups and saucers on the tray only one had been used: for Mr. Bevan looked upon the beverage taken between luncheon and dinner as a slow poison.

The third person had not put in an appearance, so that the solitary cup of tea had been swallowed by the lady, who was sitting in a small arm-chair by the fire, who had spoken in a weary tone in answer to the lawyer's question.

She was a woman in the prime of life, and possessing remarkable personal attractions; even the pallor and weariness of her face could not affect her beauty. She had regular features, a clear dark complexion, brilliant dark eyes, and a profusion of jet black hair, straight and thick, growing low upon her forehead, and drawn back in a rich close knot at the back of her well-turned head.

The expression just suited to the statuesque beauty of such a face was undoubtedly a haughty one, but there was no haughtiness on the regular features or in the beautiful black eyes—they were troubled, anxious, and perplexed.

The lawyer, seated in his erect posture by the centre table, on which the papers and letters and documents were all neatly ranged, looked at her with something like compassion in his keen gray eyes.

James Bevan was not naturally a sympathetic man, nor had his profession tended to make him so; but he felt a certain sympathy for the woman before him, and for the position in which she was placed.

"I suppose you and Mrs.——" He paused abruptly and bit his lip, then began again, quietly. "I suppose you and your sister have discussed your future plans? When you wrote to me, saying you would be in London, you mentioned that you did not intend to make a long stay here."

"Nor do we. Yet sometimes the question arises whether it would not be better to remain here. People are so free in London, and we can live without attracting attention here better than anywhere else."

"Your sister could not live in London without great risk, if she wishes to keep her incognita," remarked the lawyer thoughtfully. "Her appearance is remarkable, and it is only a year ago since her beauty was much commented upon here."

"She is greatly changed."

"Doubtless; but the alteration will be only temporary. When she recovers her health, she will regain her beauty. She does not wish to remain in London, I presume?"

"Oh, no; but——"

She paused abruptly.

"Why not go abroad?" suggested Mr. Bevan, after a little pause for consideration, as he rose and stood upon the rug, with his back to the fire.

"Cecil will not. Indeed, she is not strong enough yet to face a journey of any moment; but were that not so, she seems to have an invincible objection to leaving England."

"Strange," muttered the lawyer musingly, as he bent his thick, gray brows in a thoughtful frown. "One would think that she would be glad to turn her back upon it for good."

"One would think so, indeed; but it is not so. She may alter by-and-by, especially as she grows stronger; but at present, her one longing seems to be to rest—to go away to some quiet little country place, and live there."

"That would not be a bad plan; at least, until she is stronger," Mr. Bevan said thoughtfully. "She might live for years in some little country place without her story becoming known. You have too little experience of England, Mrs. Geith, to know how extremely stationary the inhabitants of some of our country places are, even in these days of rapid and easy locomotion. My sister is married to a very wealthy country gentleman in Devonshire, and during the thirty years of their married life they have never travelled farther than Exeter."

"Indeed," said Mrs. Geith with languid politeness; "then country life must have its pleasures!"

"Country life is not living,—it is stagnation!" remarked the old lawyer energetically. "But a shell of it is good for people worn out by over-excitement and intense emotion. Quiet, fresh air, milk from the cow—not the cow with the iron tail—would be capital things for Mrs."—again he paused and bit his lips—"for your sister. Take her into the country, Mrs. Geith; let her bask in the sunshine, in whose existence we Londoners are beginning to disbelieve," he added with a glance at the window; "she'll soon get strong."

Mrs. Geith shook her head sorrowfully, rose from her chair, and crossing the room went and stood by the window; the lawyer looking after her, as she moved across the room, thought admiringly what a superb figure she had, and what grace there was in every movement.

For a few minutes she stood there looking out in silence. The fog was thick, and the lamps on the river were dim, and the river itself and the bridges were invisible and blotted out, but had the day been clear, and the morning sunshine flooded the sky, Laura Geith would have seen nothing of the river or the sunshine, for the tears which filled her dark eyes, tears which she was too proud and too self-possessed to let fall.

There was a little silence in the shabby hotel sitting room; Mr. Bevan fidgeted in his place on the hearthrug, possessed by a very unusual nervousness. He was an old bachelor, and a stern misogamist, but this woman's proud, self-contained manner, so full of repressed pain, touched him as no passion of tears or violent emotion could have done; perhaps her beauty was not without an influence upon him, doubtless it added to the interest her position could not fail to possess for him.

He followed her to the window, and put his hand gently upon her arm.

"This has been a sorrowful home-coming for you, Mrs. Geith," he said, with a perceptible softening of his voice. "You had your own troubles to bear, and they did not need any addition."

"My own troubles faded into insignificance when I found my sister in such an awful position," she said quietly, stilling the quivering of her lips by a great effort. "My husband was an old man, and although we had been very happy together, his long illness had prepared me for his death, which his acute suffering made a happy release from pain. Understand me,"—she went on hurriedly, seeing the expression which crossed his face, and that he drew back slightly from her,—"I never regretted my marriage; it was a happy one, for it gave me a true friend when I was friendless, and it gave me a home and shelter and wealth. I never had reason to regret it, although I fear it was its happiness which led me to influence Cecil, and—and—this is how it has ended!"

She finished with an abrupt little gesture of pain; her face was very pale as, leaving the window, she came back to the fire, and its red light fell upon her, upon her rich, dark beauty, and the long black gown she wore.

She sank down rather heavily into her former seat, and pointed to one opposite to her.

"Sit down," she said, with a touch of imperiousness in her manner which matched her haughty little gesture. "We are so alone, so utterly friendless, we are in such need of advice, of counsel, that, if you can spare the time, I shall be glad to tell you a little about ourselves, it may help you to understand——"

Mr. Bevan hesitated.

"I will not detain you long," she added

coldly. "You can spare a few minutes?"

The lawyer took out his watch and looked at it by the firelight.

"A quarter to five," he said quietly. "My train leaves Waterloo for Richmond at six o'clock. I have an hour to spare," and he seated himself deliberately in the seat she had indicated; "it is at your service."

"Thank you," she said gratefully, and for a few moments she sat looking into the red glow of the fire in silence and in deep thought.

Then rather suddenly she raised her head.

"Ah!" she exclaimed, "I need not consider: the story is so simple a one that it will be easy to tell, and I will not trespass upon your kindness and patience by unnecessary details."

Mr. Bevan made a polite deprecating gesture, which Mrs. Geith did not heed.

"You have been very kind to us," she went on cordially, "and friendless as we are we appreciate kindness. I have not even an acquaintance in England, and Cecil, poor child——" she broke off with a little bitter laugh. "You know how many friends she has!"

"Under the circumstances—" began Mr. Bevan deprecatingly.

"Under the circumstances," she interrupted him quickly, "it could not be otherwise, no doubt, and I blame no one. Perhaps in their places I should have acted as they did, only, Mr. Bevan, when I think what would have become of her if I were not here, I cannot feel very kindly towards my fellow creatures."

"I would——"

"You would have done your best for her, I am sure of that," she added cordially. "You are not one to fail in your duty, and you would have deemed it your duty to help her, whatever you belief."

"My dear madame," Mr. Bevan said, smiling; "I am a lawyer, and my belief in the infallibility of the law is absolute. Therefore when by the law——"

Mrs. Geith lifted her hand with a gesture that imposed silence.

"We will not speak of that, if you please," she said hurriedly. "I have never asked you what your opinion is. I do not wish to know. That episode is over, and we will not recall it. Cecil and I begin the world together, as if it had never been; we have put it out of our lives forever."

He bowed quietly as if in assent, but outwardly assenting as he was, he knew in his heart that such blotting out was impossible—that what is done can never be undone.

"I suppose our story is not a very uncommon one," she began wearily; "our father died when I was twelve, and Cecil only two years old, and my mother was left with her two children, and for sole support her pension as a widow of a captain in the army. My father had been an only son, but his parents had discarded him when he married, because my mother was only a governess, the penniless orphan of a poor curate. They died before him, still unrelenting, leaving their money to different charitable institutions, heedless that their son and their grandchildren were almost starving.

"How we lived after my father's death I scarcely know; it must have been a terrible struggle to my mother, whose health was always delicate; she sank under it, and five years after her husband's death she died, and we were left alone. We had been living for some years at school in Belgium, where in return for her board and ours, my mother had been filling the onerous position of English teacher and sewing-maid, besides instructing the younger pupils in music. I received, besides my board, my education there, and when she died, the principal of the school offered me the post she had occupied in exchange for Cecil's tuition. I agreed gladly, and filled it for five years. When I was in India, Mr. Bevan," she added, with a little smile, "people used to wonder at my kindness and attention to governesses and teachers. Had they known they would not have wondered."

Mr. Bevan murmured something not very distinctly. Mrs. Geith continued, her dark eyes fixed upon the fire—

"I was twenty-two years old when I met Mr. Geith. I was spending a few days' holiday with one of the girls who had been a fellow pupil of mine. She had married soon after leaving school a young civil engineer, who had a good appointment in India, and they were staying in Brussels for their honeymoon, and at their hotel I met Mr. Geith. He proposed to me and I gladly and thankfully accepted; he was a good and generous husband to me, and an equally good and generous brother-in-law to Cecil.

"We left her at school in Brussels when we went to India, and when she was nineteen we came home for a time, and she joined us," Mrs. Geith went on; "and he saw her, and—and—and——" She rose with a sudden irrepressible movement, then sank back in her chair. "Well, you know the rest!"

Mr. Bevan nodded. Yes, he knew the rest, or, at least, as much of it as the world knew, perhaps rather more.

"I induced her to commit the act which has destroyed her young life," she exclaimed, with sudden passion. "I am to blame in a great measure! I thought she was cold and passionless, like myself, and I have been contented, aye, happy, in my marriage with a man whom I did not love. I believed and induced her to believe that wealth, and position, and worldly aggrandizement were good gifts, and she was so young, poor child, that she believed me, and now——"

She covered her eyes with her hand, a small white hand glittering with gems, for a moment. Mr. Bevan glanced at her under his grey eye-brows,

"I don't see that you are much to blame; you may have made a mistake, a mistake which led to terrible results, but your intention was good," he remarked "and that is everything. There is nothing now to be done but to make the best of a bad job. Remember how much worse things might have turned out," he added gravely.

She shuddered a little as she uncovered her eyes and looked at him.

"Yes, I do remember it, although sometimes one is inclined to doubt whether the worst would not, after all, have been the best."

"Is not that somewhat ungrateful?" the lawyer said quietly. "Things have turned out wonderfully better than we dared to hope, we ought to rejoice; and you will do so, Mrs. Geith, after the first pangs are over. Your sister is a rich woman, and if money is not happiness, it goes a long way towards it, and——"

"She will not use the money," Mrs. Geith said coldly.

"She will be wiser after awhile," said the lawyer cheerfully. "In the meantime it is fortunate, is it not, that you are so amply provided for?"

"Perhaps it is," said Mrs. Geith sadly. "Yet, if we had to work, it might be good for us—work is a good anodyne, as I have often found."

"No doubt, but it is one sometimes difficult to procure," returned Mr. Bevan quietly.

"You mean that it would be difficult in this case," she said quickly. "Well, I dare say it would."

"Whether difficult or not, I congratulate you on the fact that there is no necessity for it," he replied, smiling; then rising, he continued briskly, "and about this country house, Mrs. Geith; shall I look out for one for you?"

"You think we should do better in a country place than in a large town?" she queried anxiously; "that there would be less chance of recognition or discovery?"

"Decidedly less chance of recognition, especially if you will be content to settle in a place somewhat out of the beaten track. There are lots of nice old country houses which the owners would be glad to let you at a moderate rental; in fact, I think I know of one in Daleshire, which would be the very thing for you and Mrs.——"

"Miss Lestrange," interrupted a pretty, low voice at his elbow, and turning sharply, the lawyer became aware that a third person had noiselessly entered the room, and stood holding out a little hand in greeting, as she looked at him with a faint little smile on her lips, a smile which did not reach her eyes.

"How do you do?" the pretty, pathetic tones went on quietly, as Mr. Bevan took the little hand which lay light as a snow-flake on his broad palm, and looked down in silence at the wasted little fingers. "I am glad I woke up in time to see you, Mr. Bevan. I have been sleeping away this foggy afternoon. I am getting such a lazy person," she added with a smile, as she sank down into the nearest chair; "I fall asleep on the slightest provocation."

"A very good way of getting fat and rosy," Mr. Bevan said in a changed voice, a little troubled, a little constrained, and cold and startled, as if the sight of her had been a shock to him. "You are better, I trust?"

"Oh, yes; don't I look well?"

She was smiling, with the same lip smile which did not reach her eyes, and which seemed to make their sadness even deeper. Stern, cold lawyer as he was, there was a mist before James Bevan's eyes as they rested on her, and contrasted what she was now with what she had been a year—nay, six short months ago. He could not answer the lightly spoken words in the same tone.

"Not very well," he answered, and his voice was only troubled now, not cold and constrained. "But you have been very ill, and people don't recover all at once from such an illness. Mrs. Geith and I have just been talking of the good a few months of fresh, country air would do you."

"Country air!" she repeated with a little shudder. "I think"—she rose abruptly, and bending towards the fire, held out her little hands to its warmth, such thin hands that it seemed as if the red glow of the fire shone through them—"that I have had enough of the country. I almost believe that a wilderness of bricks and mortar, and hansom cab, and electric bells will suit me best for the rest of my life."

"Certainly the country at this season does not present any particular attractions," Mr. Bevan said quietly; he had recovered his momentary emotion, and was his own calm, self-possessed self once more. "Even London fogs seem preferable to the mud and slush and desolation of country roads, but in a month or six weeks we shall have spring, and I know a part of Daleshire which will be looking its best."

"Mr. Bevan thinks he knows of a house which would suit us, Cecil," Mrs. Geith said gently, breaking the silence she had maintained since her sister had entered the room.

"Yes," Mr. Bevan said briskly, "a charming old Tudor house, situated in some of the prettiest country in England, near the sea too, in a sleepy dreamy district where people have nothing else to do but sleep and get fat; where nobody troubles his or her head about his or her neighbor's business; a veritable little Arcadia."

The girl had raised herself from her bending attitude, and now stood erect, her hands loosely linked together, her eyes fixed on the fire. The red light fell upon her slender figure in its long, loose white robe, and the pathetic beauty of her wasted face.

"People live to great ages there," Mr. Bevan continued, rubbing his hands briskly and cheerfully, and acting so well in his new compassion for the girl before him that neither she nor Mrs. Geith guessed that the briskness and cheerfulness were feigned. "In fact, I wonder that they ever die."

"Long life is a very doubtful blessing," Miss Lestrange said in a low voice.

"Not when people are well and strong," Mr. Bevan said quickly. "It is only when we feel ill and weak that life seems an undesirable possession. You feel so now, I daresay, but——"

"I do not feel so because I am ill or weak," she interrupted him quickly; "I feel so because life has been most cruel to me, and——"

"Be revenged upon it, then," he said hastily interrupting her, and speaking on an impulse, rare in the self-possessed old lawyer. "If it has been cruel until now, make it be good to you for the future. Take the good things it has, and do not let them go. You have many of them already, take others. You have wealth and youth, and ease, and luxury; and happiness will come by and by. When it comes, take it, and don't let it pass you by." He broke off with a little laugh, and dropping his earnest tone, resumed, in his usual quiet voice—"but I'm talking in a rather melodramatic manner. I begin to think I have mistaken my vocation—I ought to have been an actor. I should have made my fortune on the stage of the Princess Theatre!"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A JAPANESE WEDDING.—In Japan it is not good form for the bride to admit that she enjoys the prospect of getting married, and, therefore, when she is told about it three or four days before the event, she is expected to set up a loud bellowing, and keep it up day and night until the ceremony comes on. After she has been richly dressed for the occasion, she is expected to hang back and shriek, and make a show of resisting her attendants' efforts to lead her to the bridegroom. This hollow farce is kept up by one of the bridesmaids finally throwing a veil over the bride's face, while an old hag takes her on her back and carries her to a sedan chair waiting at the door to take her to the bridegroom's mansion. When she arrives there, she is a wife, the simple ride in a flowery chair having the mystic power of transforming her into a married woman. From that time she brightens up and smiles.

PRAISE never gives us much pleasure unless it occur with our own opinion, and extol us for those qualities in which we chiefly excel.

Bric-a-Brac.

WIND AND WATER.—A curious belief of the Chinese is what is called the "Fengchui," or the influence of wind and water upon the physical and mental prosperity of the race. There are regular authorities in this belief, and without consulting them a Chinaman will not build a house or choose a grave. This belief has one great charm, insomuch that everything in a Chinese city is found to harmonise with nature. The houses all face to the south, and wherever the eye rests it meets with a pleasing picture.

GINGERBREAD.—It will surprise housekeepers to learn that our homely every-day luxury, gingerbread, has been used since the fourteenth century. It was prepared with rye-meal, made into a dough, and ginger and other spices, with sugar or honey, were kneaded into it. It was introduced into England by the Court of Henry IV. for their festivals, and soon brought into general use. Since then it has retained its popularity and contributed much to the pleasures and enjoyments of young and old. A great change of course was after a while made in its composition, and particularly after it was introduced into this country.

QUEER NAMES.—Many of the towns in the great Western land are curious, and sound strange to old country ears. Here are a few: A. B. C., Axle, Accident, Beef Hide, Big Bug, Big Fool, Braggadocia, Chicory Coffee, Cow Boy, Crab Tree, Dammit, Dirt Town, Door Way, Frozen Creek, Good Land, Good Night, Good Luck, Gunpowder, Hatton, Hat Off, High Up, Hobbie, Inglenook, Jingo, Johnny Cake, Jump Off Joe, Macphelah, Mad Indian, Matrimony, Nine Times, Number One, Obligation, Our Carter, Oz, Pat's Store, Patta Gumpus, Plevna (several), Quiz Quod, Rabbit Hash, Rat, U Bet (You Bet).

INJURED GODS.—A primitive notion existed among the Romans and other races that a bridge was an offence and injury to the river-god, as it saved people from being drowned while fording or swimming across, and so robbed the deity of a certain number of victims which were his due. For many centuries in Rome propitiatory offerings of human victims were made every year to the Tiber; men and women were drowned by being bound and flung from the wooden Sublician bridge which till nearly the end of the Republican period was the one and only bridge across the Tiber in Rome.

FAITH IN REVOLVERS.—There's one man in Buffalo who has lost his faith in revolvers. A slight noise awoke him and, without moving, he intently listened for the cause, at the same time experiencing that peculiar sensation which people have when they feel certain that some-one is near them, but invisible. He thought he heard some one at his window, and a moment later a form stood between him and the dim light. He drew his revolver from under the pillow, loaded in every chamber, cocked it and, pointing at the figure, said: "Who's there?" A quiet voice answered, "Me; what's the matter?" It was his good old mother who came into his room for something. The revolver dropped from his nerveless grasp, and when he thought how close a call he had had he made up his mind to go out of the revolver business, and he has done so.

HOW LONG.—How long may a human being live in perfect possession of his faculties and powers for good or evil? The question is important to all. Conceive a statesman with a despotic power of influencing men's wills who should last as long as Old Parr! History, social or political, would be altered; the whole progress of humanity might be advanced for aeons or retarded by one man. If we may believe a curious French book, "History of Persons who have lived for many Ages, and grown young again" (Paris, 1716), this fancy is not wholly absurd or impossible. Hereon our French author enlightens us with learning from Pliny, Cornaro, and Phlegon of Tralles. Thus Fohi, the founder of the Chinese Empire, reigned 115 years. Antiochus Epiphanes died at 149. Tacitus gives 175 years to Tuisco, a German prince. Daddon, an Illyrian noble, lived for 500 years, according to Alexander Cornelius. Anacreon gives Cinyras of Cyprus 160 years, and Arganthonius, a Spaniard, saw 150 summers. Thus, even in its natural way, we need never despair of any man attaining say, 130, a pleasant thought in the case of really great men, whose lives are useful to their country.

AGAINST PLEASURE.

BY MARY PHILLIPS.

There's no such thing as pleasure here,
'Tis all a perfect cheat,
Which does but shine and disappear,
Whose charm is but deceit;
The empty bribe of yielding souls,
Which first betrays, and then controls.

'Tis true, it looks at distance fair,
But if we do approach,
The fruit of Sodom will impair,
And perish at a touch;
It being than in fancy best,
And we expect more than possess.

For by our pleasures we are cloy'd,
And so desire is done;
Or else, like rivers, they make wide
The channels where they run:
And either way true bliss destroys,
Making us narrow, or our joys.

We covet pleasure easily,
But ne'er true bliss possess;
For many things must make it be,
But one may make it less.
Nay, were our state as we could choose it,
'Twould be consumed by fear to lose it.

What art thou then, thou winged sir,
More weak and swift than fame?
Whose next successor is despair,
And its attendant shame.
The experienced prince then reason had,
Who said of pleasure, "It is mad."

A FLOWER OF FATE

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WILD WARRINGTONS," "LIKE LOST SHEEP," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXVII.

WHEN I recovered strength and sensibility, I was in the master's room. I found myself sitting there in an easy-chair, with Mr. Binkworthy bending over me, looking thoroughly scared and anxious.

He was holding brandy, or brandy-and-water, to my lips.

I thrust it away, and with difficulty rose to my feet.

"Pah! I do not want it. Don't!" I muttered, in a tone of weary disgust. "I am going home immediately."

"You are not strong enough yet. Do pray wait a bit, Madame Fleurette," pleaded the manager. "'Tisn't very late, not eleven and——"

I shook my head, held up my hand to silence him, found my wraps, and put them on.

One of them was a fur-lined cloak, the warm hood of which I drew close over my roughened hair.

"Let me see you home—you really ain't fit to go alone," said Mr. Binkworthy earnestly. "Or there's my brome waiting outside. Take it an' welcome, so long as you get safe home."

"No, no, no! I am quite well now, indeed I am, thank you," I told him hurriedly. "It was the heat of the place—nothing else. The theatre is dreadfully full to-night."

"Not more crammed than common since you've been singing here," replied the manager, with a rather uneasy air.

He was accompanying me down the dim whitewashed passage to the stage door.

I felt that he was glancing askance at me.

"They were saying," he added in the next breath, "that—that you had recognized an old friend in the stalls, Madame Fleurette, and it upset you."

"They said that?"

"Yes. Was it true?"

"If it was, it is no one's business but mine," I replied coldly. "I repeat, the theatre was stifling, frightfully so. It always is. It wants better ventilation or something. I am sure I wonder that I have not fainted before."

"The night's bitter enough outside, anyhow," said the manager drily—"it snows hard."

"So it did when I arrived. Good-night, Mr. Binkworthy."

He caught hold of my cloak to detain me another minute or two.

"For Heaven's sake, Madame Fleurette, take care o' yourself!" he said huskily. "Don't go and ketch cold, whatever you do, or—or you mayn't be able to sing to-morrow night."

The bare thought of such a calamity seemed to make him perspire.

He blew a loud sigh, pulled out a puce-silk pocket-handkerchief and wiped his shining forehead.

"That mustn't happen, you know," said he, with a poor attempt at a friendly smile. "'Twould never do to disappoint 'em at this time o' year, and, when you've got to be such a tremendous favorite with 'em all, too!"

"Do not be frightened. It will not happen," said I, with a kind of scornful impatience which I took no pains to disguise. "I don't forget what is expected of me here so long as the breath remains in my body. But a cab-horse," I sighed bitterly, as I moved from the stage door into the bleak snowy street, "drops sometimes in the shafts—dead!"

Notwithstanding, after that night the Levity saw me no more.

After that night I never again sang at Mr. Binkworthy's theatre of varieties. Indeed I never again saw the manager himself.

Thenceforward we were as strangers, as though we had never met. Such is the strange uncertainty of the future, and of Fate!

I hurried along, seeking a cab, my cloak wrapped tightly about me, my fearful eyes glancing nervously to the right and to the left.

The night was unutterably cold and dreary; the snow still fell, but here in the great city losing its chill purity the instant it reached the earth; the sludgy pavements were almost deserted.

All the late omnibuses were full; but I recollected that there was a cab-stand not many yards farther on, and thither with beating heart I hastened.

Could I escape? Was there a chance for me?

Yet no shriek of alarm left my lips when I felt my arm touched, touched timidly by some unseen hand, when a figure stole out from the shadow of a roomy doorway belonging to an empty house with broken and shuttered windows which adjoined a portion of the theatre I had just quitted. No!

No cry, either of alarm or of surprise, broke from me; for, after what had occurred within the theatre, I had instinctively known that this would follow—that there would be no avoiding it—that I must meet it, this grisly spectre of the past, and bear with the horror of it all with what courage in the circumstances I could summon to my aid.

Nevertheless, had a corpse, starting from its coffin, suddenly touched me, I could not have shuddered more violently or have experienced a keener terror.

I quailed, trembling all over, shrank into the shadow of the long-empty and most desolate-looking house.

My eyes shut involuntarily, dreading what they would see; my spread hands were uplifted for a moment or so as if to shield me from a blow.

"Flower—Flower," said the well-remembered voice, humble, mild, tremulous with sorrowful entreaty, gentle as ever, "and so we meet again. How strange is life! How strange are the accidents of it! Oh, my child—though child you are no longer, but grown to a womanhood wondrously fair—speak to me, give me a word! I have been waiting and watching for you here; speak then to your poor old——"

"Father," I said in a shuddering whisper, "in pity leave me! No; do not touch me again, but leave me in peace, if there be such a thing as peace in this world. And, if it be that—that you still care for me, I ask you to prove it this instant by leaving me as I beg you. We are nothing to each other—nothing but strangers. When I left Moor Edge, I left you forever—forever and ever. I have other ties now. Never dare to trouble me again—but go!"

I had opened my horrified eyes, with my hands pressed hard over my bosom, my face as white as the falling snowflakes—still cowering backward against the wall of the forsaken house, lest my garments even should be defiled by contact with the man before me.

In the pallid light from the street-lamps in our vicinity I perceived that he was regarding me with mild questioning blue eyes full of perplexity.

One hand was extended in a pleading manner towards me; in the other was the black bag without which—as in the old days—he traveled nowhither.

But the pure cold snow, dancing so thickly and so noiselessly earthward, was fast clothing in white the noisome ugly thing.

"Flower," sadly said he whom once I had known as and innocently called my "uncle Simon," "you are very hard, my dear: I will not say unnatural, because perhaps it is only—only natural, after all, that you, having—as you told me in that message that you left behind you when you fled from Moor Edge, and indeed as is very evident to me now—at last discovered the truth, should shrink from him who always loved you so well, dear—nay, who would——"

"Love, love," I gasped, "do not, I pray you, think of that beautiful word as anything that could possibly have existence between you and me! It is not possible—not true. I ceased to care for you, to regret you, when I learned the truth. Ah, it was too cruel, too horrible!"

"Oh, Flower," said the old man very desolately, the tears beginning to trickle down his changed cheeks, "you are too hard—too hard upon me! Child, you would at least pity me—I believe you would not be so unkind, if you knew how wretched I am in my old age, how lonely I have been since you went away! The old moorland home is sadly altered since you knew it, Flower. It was always solitary, dear, I'm aware; it is worse than solitary now. Flower, for the sake of the happy old days that are dead and gone and cannot return, let me take you by the hand, only once again, my dear, just once. Let me take your hand in mine, and hear you say 'uncle Simon'—just once, only once, as you used to do! A minute ago you called me 'father.' Why was that? Strange, very strange, coming from you, Flower. Why was it, dear?" he whispered plaintively. "Call me 'uncle Simon' again; not ——"

Nearer he crept to me; the black bag brushed my gown.

I flung out my arms and passionately waved him back.

"Do you not understand me?" I said sternly. "Since we parted I have learned the truth, the whole truth. If I called you 'father,' I did not mean to. The name slipped from me unawares; you are nothing to me. Your meeting me to-night is dreadful. I was unhappy enough, Heaven knows, before; I am at this moment fifty times unhappier than I was. Thanks to my husband," I cried bitterly, "I am no longer an innocent and an ignorant girl, I am a woman, with a woman's hard experience of life. My husband, where all was gloom and darkness, has let daylight in. I have gained wisdom, and have paid dearly for the gaining of it. That is the way of things in this world. He guessed, somehow found out, everything! He told me the truth—the truth Simon Creedy. Do you hear? Do you comprehend? Go, go, go, then; the sight of you hurts my eyes! Let me pass, but do not touch me; I want to get home to my child."

"Husband—child," repeated the old man dreamily, as if my passionately-uttered words, every one of them, save those two, had not fallen upon his ears at all; "tell me something about them, your husband and your child, perhaps children? Have more than one, tell me, Flower? Are you happy in your married life, quite happy, dear?" he said eagerly. "And, let me hear how it is that I find you singing at that theatre place. They told me inside that you sing there every night—that—that ——"

"My present life is my own, it does not concern you, Simon Creedy," I answered wildly. "Whatever it be, whatever I may hold dear in it, it is my own affair, not yours. Evil, lost old man, I am nothing to you! I may be your child, but I have naught in my heart for you except deepest loathing; and therefore——"

A huge dark form, but a few yards from where we stood, here advanced slowly through the whirling snow.

I sprang past Simon Creedy and grasped the policeman by the arm.

"Find me a cab, will you," I panted, "and I will give you half-a-crown!"

For a few astonished seconds he stared down into my white and agitated face, and then said—

"Certainly, 'm, I will."

He put a whistle to his lips and blew it shrilly.

"What is the matter, madam? Have you been insulted?" he asked, dropping the whistle into his pocket.

"Yes—no—yes, I mean," was my incoherent reply; and, hardly conscious of what I did, I pointed to the dark doorway of the empty house.

Straightway my burly friend turned his bull's-eye full upon the shadowy entrance-place. The piercing light of it revealed Simon Creedy crouching there upon the wet doorstep, his bowed face hidden in his hands, the black bag lying unheeded on the pavement at his feet.

With one stride the huge policeman was stooping over the abject old man. He shook him roughly by the shoulder. Simon Creedy looked up.

"Flower, Flower," he cried, "do not leave me like this! One word, dear, after all these years—one little kind word! Flower—Flower——"

With a harsh laugh the policeman stepped back.

"Why, you old sinner—you, is it?" I heard him exclaim. "You, of all limbs o' darkness in the world—you!"

The past faintness and dizziness of the theatre were returning. I felt that I could not stand unsupported. Happily at that instant a hansom drove briskly alongside the kerb-stone, and stopped quite close to me.

"Are you the fare, madam?" inquired the driver. "Some one whistled."

"Yes."

I told him whither to drive me, stumbled somehow into the cab, and sank back with a moan of despair.

The policeman came to the cab-doors, leaned one arm upon them, looked in, and said significantly—

"Do you know, 'm, who he is?" with a jerk of his helmet in the direction of the dark doorway.

"Yes."

"You do! Shall I take him into custody?"

"No, no, no! He—he has done nothing."

"I understand you, madam, that he had insulted you?"

I remembered the promised half-crown. I managed to find the money, and thrust it into the policeman's hand, saying very faintly—

"It doesn't matter, let him go. And—and please tell the man to drive fast; he knows the address."

My head, my head, oh, the throbbing, the dull dreadful giddiness of it! What did it mean? Was I going to be ill?

My big friend touched his helmet and immediately withdrew from the vehicle. In another moment I was traveling rapidly homeward to my darling, to my little sick patient child, through the whirling white mist of the wintry night.

But a desolate cry seemed to follow me upon the breath of the wild north wind, seemed now and then, with bursts of demoniac laughter, to rush by the side of the rattling cab, and refused to be shut out.

"Flower, Flower," wailed the old man's voice, "do not leave me like this, after all these years, dear, not like this! One little word," it sobbed and laughed, "one little kind word, dear! Oh, Flower, Flower!"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

PLEASE, Mrs. Darkwood, 'm, there's a Mr.—a—a Mr. Blinkworthy, I understood him to say, at the door. See you he must and will, he says. Shall I ask him to walk in?"

"See me he can't and shall not," was my reply, given very calmly—the calmness that is born of a great out a quiet and tearless despair. "By no means invite him an inch beyond the doorstep."

"But ma'am," said Mrs. Sadler dolefully, "how am I to get rid of him? Indeed, 'm, I told him as you was just about as bad as you could be, and little missy there so ill and all too; but the gentleman fired up quite angry like, and said, 'Poob, she's not too bad to see me, I'll warrant! You go and tell her I said so.' He seems a very peppery sort of gent," sniffed Mrs. Sadler.

For a few moments I pondered the aspect of affairs, then said—

"Mrs. Sadler, please be good enough to go as quietly as you can into the sitting-room and lock the door opening on the passage—make no noise if you can help it—and then come back to me."

She left the bed-room, passing through the folding-doors, and I heard her doing stealthily in the other room what I had begged her to do.

It was four o'clock in the afternoon, and already growing dark. No snow was falling to-day, it had ceased during the past night; but the sky was still leaden and low, the atmosphere was gray and cheerless, and the raw wind, which had shifted eastward, wailed and whistled at every key-hole and dismally rattled the window frames both up-stairs and down.

To-day my darling was too ill to get up, too weak indeed to raise her little dark head from the pillow unless my arm was placed beneath it. So she was lying in her cot near to the bed-room fire; and I, in my dressing-gown, with my easy-chair wheeled to the cot-side, had been trying to interest her, to rouse her from her lethargy, by reading aloud the nursery-tales that the dear little soul loved best.

But it was of no use. She smiled, took her medicine without a murmur, said she was tired, so very tired to-day, and appeared to be dozing every other minute. Her cough however, I noticed, with a sense of great thankfulness, had seemed somewhat easier since the early morning.

For myself, I was ill, really ill, bodily and mentally alike; but I hardly as yet realized the fact.

A sleepless, most wretched night, the misery of my own reflections in the still dark hours before the morning dawned had completely worn me out.

I must not give way, though; dimly yet distinctly enough I was conscious of that; for Isla's sake I must bear up, be alert, and not give way.

No—that of all calamities must not happen.

Yet, dreary and long and hopeless as the night seemed, morning, as it ever does, came at last.

On rising, the first thing I had done was to write to Mr. Binkworthy. I would sing no more at the Levity until, well, until my child was well again.

No earthly power should move me from her side, to Mr. Binkworthy's theatre of varieties or elsewhere, until her health was thoroughly restored and I could once more, without anxiety, leave her to the care of strangers.

Thus determined, I had seized my pen and wrote hurriedly—

"Dear Sir—I find it is as you feared it would be last night. I have caught cold—and am downright ill. My little girl, too, is worse. Therefore, as I have now to nurse both her and myself, you must not, I am afraid, for some time to come expect me to return to the theatre. With sincere regrets, should I have caused you any inconvenience, "Believe me, yours truly,

"FLOWER DARKWOOD."

The note was despatched through the post before ten o'clock a. m. By four in the afternoon Mr. Binkworthy in his brougham had driven over to Bentham Street and was standing upon the doorstep of Mrs. Sadler's house.

I was not surprised. I expected the visit. I had guessed there would be a tussle over the determination I had arrived at.

But a hundred furious managers should not shake it. Once and for all, my mind was made up.

How thankful was I now that out of my weekly earnings a considerable sum of money had been lodged in a bank against the coming of a day of trouble!

Had no money been hoarded, no strict economy practiced, I should not now have been in a position to defy Mr. Binkworthy, and his wrath.

As for the future, when Isla was better, I had no fear of that. Should Mr. Binkworthy by-and-by refuse, which was hardly likely, to have anything more to do with me, there were other managers, in London as well as out of it, who would be only too glad of the chance to offer me an engagement.

Mrs. Sadler, looking rather frightened, came back on tip-toe from her errand in the sitting-room.

"And what shall I tell the gentleman, please, 'm?" she whispered. "He's thumping the step with his stick awful impatient. He do certainly seem a dreadful peppery sort," said Mrs. Sadler again, with an anxious glance over her shoulder.

"Tell him," said I quietly, "that if he stands there from now until to-morrow afternoon he will not see me; neither will he come in. He has had my letter, I have nothing further to say. I am ill, shut in my bed-room—to receive a visit either from him or from anybody else is in the circumstances an impossibility."

Mrs. Sadler slowly left the bed-room, thoughtfully nibbling the nail of her first finger as she went. I dare say she was wondering whether she could in any wise soften the message I had given her to deliver.

When she was gone, I sprang involuntarily from my chair and locked the bed-room

door also. I knew not what the manager might attempt in his angry desire for an interview.

For a long while the two voices were audible at the front door—Mr. Binkworthy's raised and indignant, Mrs. Sadler's whining and would-be conciliatory. But at last the manager departed, and with a sigh of relief I heard the wheels of his brougham roll away from Bentham Street.

"Well?" said I, turning the key again softly, and allowing my landlady to enter. "Hush—sh, my good soul! Not so loud, the child has fallen asleep again."

"Oh, he did go on," said Mrs. Sadler in a shocked whisper, "frightful! He used a lot of bad language, and that's the truth. What Mrs. Winch's niece thought next door, she was taking in the milk, I can't imagine! He kept on saying, Mrs. Darkwood, as you'd broken your contract, and a good deal more that I couldn't understand. And he said too, ma'am, as he'd have a doctor's certificate from you before eight o'clock this evening, or he'd know the reason why."

"So he shall," I answered wearily, putting my hands to my head. "Is old Mr. Jones at home?"

"Oh, yes, 'm!" said Mrs. Sadler. "He's upstairs with the newspaper, sitting over his fire."

"Will you run up to him, then, Mrs. Sadler, please, and ask him to have the kindness to go round to the surgery and tell Doctor North that I wish particularly to speak to him?" said I.

I had no hesitation in asking this favor of old Mr. Jones. A dozen times a day he would creep down from his garret floor to inquire whether there was any improvement in the child's condition, or whether, in any direction whatever, there was aught that he could do to help me. I had only to mention it, said old Mr. Jones earnestly; he would do anything he could, and be glad to.

Only on that very day, at dinner-time, had the mysterious old man come shuffling down-stairs, knocked timidly at my door, and put into my hand a china dish of magnificent purple grapes—grapes at four or five shillings a pound. "For little missy, with her old friend's best love," said he. And, before I could thank him, back he had shuffled up-stairs again.

I was very sure that old Mr. Jones would take a message for me directly to Doctor North, whom I had of late called in to prescribe for my child, and who lived conveniently near to us in another street. The Doctor, if I asked him, would at once quiet Mr. Binkworthy by certifying in the usual manner that I was, through illness or "indisposition," wholly incapable of performing my nightly work at the theatre.

And not only did old Mr. Jones volunteer to fetch Doctor North to my lodging, but moreover, insisted later on upon himself going down to the Levity to place the certificate in the hands of Mr. Binkworthy.

At first I would not hear of this notion; for the night was wet and rawly cold. But old Mr. Jones was curiously stubborn, and would not heed the objections I put forward. With a quiet haste and stern air he buttoned up his shabby overcoat, which seemed so much too big for his shrunken figure, and pulled the worn collar of it high about his ears.

Resolutely he clapped on his shabby old beaver hat, with its nap brushed all the wrong way, and declared hurriedly, nervously, that nothing should hinder him in doing what he knew to be his duty.

"Oh, Mr. Jones," I entreated, with tears of gratitude swimming in my sad eyes, perhaps running down my wan cheeks, "do not, do not you trouble! One of Mrs. Sadler's sons, I have no doubt, will, when they come home, oblige me for once ——"

"Mrs. Sadler's sons may be late in, they often are," muttered old Mr. Jones. "I am going."

The mean narrow house-passage where we stood together was but poorly lighted. He looked in the feeble gas-gleam like the ghost of some little shabby old man, thought I insensibly.

"Then at any rate you must take a cab," I said, venturing to press my purse into his hand. "You are going solely on my account; and therefore I cannot allow ——"

Courteously but firmly he waved the purse from him.

"You are mistaken. I am not going out solely on your errand, madam," murmured the shadowy old creature, with something like real old-world dignity in his mein. "I have to call upon a friend of mine as well. I am truly happy to be of service to you at the same time."

He shuffled past me; unlatched the front door.

He closed it softly, and was gone. I had never before exchanged so many words with old Mr. Jones!

* * * * * *

The very wheels of the omnibuses rolling by in the distance seemed to move onward with a muffled sound.

People in the street outside, I fancied, hushed their voices and trod the damp pavement with care when they passed the door of Mrs. Sadler's house.

In the wind to-night, as it swept round the corner of dingy Bentham Street, I heard the crying and the moaning of unearthly voices, chanting a dirge—a dirge that ere long would sink into a requiem—for the innocent soul of my darling, my beloved child, that was traveling home to its God.

She had asked whether I would let her get up to-day, had asked me to let her lie upon the sofa in the sitting-room.

And so, as Doctor North had plainly assured me that "nothing could make any difference," that was how he put it, that she might do quite as she pleased, have just whatever she fancied, I carried her in the afternoon (she was scarcely heavier than one of her own dolls) into the front room, and laid her amongst many pillows upon the couch by the fire.

If she was in pain, I took her into my arms, and thus rocked her to sleep upon my breast.

Well, she must go, it seemed, the Almighty knew best.

It was now three days ago since the manager of the Levity had called at my lodgings and I had refused him admittance.

He had got from me what he said he would have—my Doctor's certificate.

Mr. Binkworthy so far had troubled me no more, though every knock at the door set my heart thumping, lest it should be some messenger sent by him from the theatre, or perhaps Mr. Binkworthy come again himself.

And nearly four days had now elapsed since I had recognized Simon Creedy amongst the Levity audience, when the old man had waylaid me in the vicinity of the stage door, and had so pitifully besought me, for the sake of the unalterable past, for the "one little kind word" that I would not, could not give him!

And for two whole days and two whole nights I had neither taken off my clothes nor stretched my limbs upon a bed; my post had been by my darling's cot.

Nor for many, many hours had I shed a tear, or swallowed solid food, or said a coherent prayer.

My tears, I believed, were all gone, food choked me, and when I tried to pray I had no mastery over my words, I could only moan dumbly in an agony of grief, and dimly wonder whether Heaven understood.

Presently the door of the sitting-room opened, and Mrs. Sadler came noiselessly in.

She had a cup of tea and some toast upon a tray.

Could it, then, be tea-time? Certainly it had grown very dark; and the lamps were lighted in the misty street.

Yes, indeed, said Mrs. Sadler in answer to my listless inquiry, it had already gone six by St. Saviour's clock; and she had been waiting for me to ring.

"And now, dear lady," added the kind soul earnestly, "do try and drink this tea, and swallow a morsel o' toast with it. It's beautiful strong, and there's a pinch o' green in it. It'll do you all the good in the world."

I thanked her; mechanically took the cup; but shook my head at the toast before me.

So Mrs. Sadler, sighing, sat down the tray, quietly stirred the fire, and lighted the gas overhead.

And then, having lowered the blind and drawn the faded moreen curtains, she came back to the sofa and stared compassionately down at Isla.

"Poor little dearie!" she muttered. "A happy release!"

My hands trembled. The tea-spoon dropped into my lap.

"Has any one been spreading straw on the road outside?" I asked nervously.

"Oh, no, 'm!" replied Mrs. Sadler. "Did you want it done, though? If so, Charlie will be in a minute, and then I'll send him round to the mews, or perhaps old Mr. Jones 'll go directly. I will step up and ask him; shall I?"

"Do not trouble; I don't think it matters," I answered dully. "It sounds to me exactly as if some one had been spreading straw in the road—that is all. Everything seems so muffled."

"It's your poor head," said Mrs. Sadler pityingly. "It aches and hums badly, I've no doubt. What you want, 'm, is rest and sleep, that's what you want more than anything."

"I daresay. But, if I fall asleep, I hope and pray that I may never wake up again, I mean, here. It would be beautiful for me and my child to wake up together in a kindlier world than this. I can imagine nothing sweeter," said I dreamily.

Mrs. Sadler, feebly shocked, quickly replied—

"Oh, no, 'm! Don't say that; it's wicked."

And by-and-by she left us alone once more.

It was an hour or two later perhaps when she looked in again. She was then going out, it appeared, for she had on her rusty black bonnet and shawl, and had a canvas bag—her marketing-bag she called it—on her arm.

"I am obliged to go out, 'm," she whispered—"just to the grocer's and the pork-butcher's, and to call on a neighbor over the way. Is there anything I can do for you, Mrs. Darkwood?"

"Thank you, nothing."

Mrs. Sadler, scarcely breathing, crept to the couch side.

"How is she?" she asked.

"I can see no difference."

Mrs. Sadler shook her head mournfully.

"Poor little angel! She will not live till morning."

"God knows!" I answered desolately.

"Well, 'm, Bob and Charlie are both underneath," pointing to the carpet, "playing cribbage. If you want anything, though I won't be gone longer than I can help, you've only to call to them at the top of the kitchen stairs, they'll hear. And old Mr. Jones is at home too."

"Very well. Should I want them, I will call them," I replied calmly.

With a sniff and a sigh the landlady vanished as noiselessly as she had appeared, murmuring—

"Oh, dear, oh, dear, if she'd only take and have a good fit o' crying, it 'ud do her all the good in the world! It isn't natural, it can't be, to bear up agen death like this."

I do not know how long Mrs. Sadler had been gone; it may have been an hour, it may have been only a quarter of one; but presently there came another soft "tap, tap, tap," at my sitting-room door. I supposed that Mrs. Sadler had returned from her shopping.

"Come in," said I.

But the tapping was repeated, and no one entered.

So I rose unsteadily, with a sensation of sudden giddiness, I daresay I was weak from my vigil and fasting, and opened the door myself. I peered forth cautiously. I could see no one.

"Who is there?" I breathed, trembling a little.

Then, standing in the dimmest and shadowiest part of the passage, with its one sickly gas-jet near to the fanlight of the front door, I discerned old Mr. Jones.

His long and shabby overcoat was buttoned close up to his chin; a gray woolen comforter was twisted tightly about his neck.

His scant wisps of silvery hair, I noticed, were uncovered, and rested upon the cloudy comforter; but his shabby old hat and stick were in his hand, it was plain that he was going out.

Perhaps Mrs. Sadler had said something to him about the straw, and he was now going to the mews.

"Old Mr. Jones!" was my involuntary exclamation.

"Yes," he said.

"Do you want me?" I inquired wonderingly.

"I should like to hear from your own lips whether it is true," he murmured, his gray head bent so low that in the passage gloom I could no longer see his face. "Mrs. Sadler says the child is dying—cannot live until the morning."

I smote my hands together and pressed them against my bosom.

"Old man," I cried, and in my own ears my voice sounded strange and unearthly, like those other spirit-voices in the wind, "you torture me; you are cruel! Cannot you see that my distress and anguish are insupportable, that my grief is killing me? Why should you come here to stare at my breaking heart?"

"Heaven forbid!" he answered, as if to himself. With his usual shambling gait he moved to the street door. "Yes," he muttered; "it is time now. In distress, broken-hearted, no friends near her in this terrible hour, he would blame me if he were not told. I will go. Yes, yes; I can see it is the proper thing to do. I promised to do my duty, and the promise shall be kept. Afterwards, I know, he will say that I did right."

I had buried my face in my hands, and was leaning heavily against the passage wall.

Yet no tears came to my hot dry eyes, though a hard gasping sob shook me roughly now and then.

When I swept my hair from my aching temples and looked dazedly around me, I was alone in the poorly-lit passage. Old Mr. Jones was not there.

Whither had he gone, the strange, mysterious old man? What did he mean, if he really meant anything?

He was, I recollected, forever muttering and saying queer things to himself, after the fashion of solitary and contemplative old folk who have seen better days perhaps in their time.

The next instant I had forgotten old Mr. Jones, his odd ways, his odd talk, and was back by my darling's side.

She had moaned twice, was turning restlessly on the pillows. Her eyes were open; but I perceived that she did not know me.

I flung myself upon my knees by the sofa and gathered my child to my heart. My touch seemed to quicken her memory. A faint passing smile answered my passionate yearning gaze.

"Isla dearest, it is mamma! Darling, say that you know mamma! You must have a little wine, a little jelly, now that you are awake, because you know, dear," said I incoherently, "it will make you well, give you strength; and then, Isla, we will go right away to the sea again, and will never come back any more to cold foggy London, but will live always by the sea, always, darling, you and I together, Isla; and will not that be beautiful, dear?"

"But I am so tired this morning," she said—"so tired! May I ask him to carry me up to the cliff, mamma?"

With a stifled cry of alarm I arose. I knew of what, of whom she was thinking.

It was terrible to see her like this. I got her to swallow a spoonful of wine; but she could not take the jelly.

See Doctor North once more I must, there might be hope, just a glimmer of real hope yet; he might do something, although he had told me in the afternoon that all that it was possible in her case to do had then by him been done.

Still I would see him once more that night. I could not rest until I had done this. I must see him in the house again, and that at once!

I rushed to the kitchen stairway. I called down into the darkness—

"Mrs. Sadler, Mrs. Sadler, I want you to run to the surgery, to fetch Doctor North! I want him immediately. Old Mr. Jones is gone out somewhere, or I would not trouble you."

No answer. Evidently the landlady had not returned.

"Is anybody downstairs?" I called piteously. "If so, please answer. I want some one to fetch Doctor North. I cannot, dare not leave the house myself."

I paused, held my breath. Dead silence. My own voice and the slow ghostly "tick tock, tick tock" of some wheezy laboring eight-day clock below alone disturbed the gloomy quiet. Indeed the house everywhere seemed horribly still.

It flashed into my mind that Mrs. Sadler's sons were there, but that they had in all likelihood fallen asleep. I must awaken them somehow. One of them must go for Doctor North.

I groped my way down the steep staircase, the stale smell of herrings that had been cooked for tea greeting my nostrils as I descended, and found the area regions utterly forsaken.

No soul was there. The gas in the kitchen was turned downward to a mere blue glimmer; the fire was nearly extinguished.

An old cribbage-board, a pack of soiled cards, an empty Bass's ale-bottle, and a couple of common tumblers littered the table in the centre of the room. That was all!

Tired of their game, Mrs. Sadler's sons, it appeared, had also quitted the house, to seek livelier recreation, perhaps, elsewhere, probably fancying that old Mr. Jones was still in his attic parlor.

Th ir mother, believing that the young men were where she had left them before going out, was doubtless gossiping comfortably with her "neighbor over the way;" and old Mr. Jones, still absent, had gone I knew not whither.

So I was in the house alone—alone with my dying child! Merciful Heaven, pity me! What should I do?

Hark! Some one was knocking at the front door, a loud bold knock that on the sad night was a jarring agony to hear. Whoever it was outside in the street must be in ignorance of what was happening within the house—that pale Death, who is so cruel and yet so kind, was hovering about the couch of my child.

As swiftly as I could, in my trembling haste stumbling up the dark steep stairs, I gained the passage and then the entrance-door—eager to get it open before the loud knocking should be repeated.

My hand was extended; it was upon the latch. But apprehension suddenly made me grow faint, and my hand dropped nerveless to my side.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THE FEEDING OF PLANTS.—The ordinary feeding of plants may here be cited, by way of showing how marvellously intricate must be the conditions which operate to produce differences in habits, sometimes amounting almost to special likings on the part of vegetable units for one kind of food, and equally special dislikes to other foods.

The farmer knowing the preference for certain food-elements by certain plants, requires to "rotate" his crops, to avoid injurious exhaustion of his soils. For instance, buckwheat will not flourish unless potassium is supplied to it. The chloride of potassium, and next to it the nitrate, are the minerals preferred by this plant. Still more extraordinary is the preference exhibited by one of the violet tribe which will only grow in soils that contain zinc.

Here, the effects of habit are seen in a singularly clear fashion; for there seems every reason to assume that the partiality for a by no means common element in soils, has been an acquired, and not an original taste of the plants which exhibit it.

The botanist thus becomes aware of the existence of a "taste," or "selective power" as it is termed, in the plant-world, influencing their food, and, as a matter of logic, affecting also their structure, functions, and entire existence.

It has been found that the pea and bean tribe specially desire lime amongst their requirements. Potatoes exhibit a special partiality for potash; and turnips share this taste.

Plants in which the seed assumes a high importance, as in most of our cereals, on the other hand, demand phosphoric acid; and certain plants, such as wheat, will withdraw large quantities of silica or flint from the soil. Iodine is found characteristically in seaweeds, and the element in question is obtained from the *kelp* produced by burning marine plants.

No better commentary on the life and habits of plants in respect of their food-tastes can be given than in the words of an eminent physiologist, who, speaking of the food of the corn-plant, says:

"Without siliceous (or flinty) earth, that plant cannot acquire sufficient strength to sustain itself erect, but forms a creeping stem, feeble and pale; without calcareous earth (or lime), it dies even before the appearance of the second leaf; without soda and without potash, it never attains a greater height than between four and five inches; without phosphorus, though growing straight and regularly formed, it remains feeble and does not bear fruit; when iron is present in the soil, it gives that deep green tint so familiar to us and grows rapidly robust; without manganese, it develops in a stunted manner and produces few flowers."

After the revelations of chemistry concerning the habits and tastes of plants and the bearing of proper food on their growth, it is not to be wondered at that scientific agriculture should be regarded as the only solution of many of the present-day difficulties of the farmer.

THE best portion of a good man's life are his little nameless unremembered acts of kindness and of love.

WE MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

We might have been—these are but common words,
And yet they make the sum of life's bewailing—
They are the echo of those final chords
Whose music life deplores when unavailing—
We might have been.

We might have been so happy, says the child,
Pent in the weary school-room during summer,
When the green rushes hid the marshes wild,
And rosy fruits attend the radiant comer—
We might have been.

It is the motto of all human things,
The end of all that waits on mortal seeking;
The weary weight upon hope's flagging wings,
It is the cry of the warm heart while breaking—
We might have been.

Life knoweth no like misery; the rest
Are single sorrows—but in this are blended
All sweet emotions that disturb the breast,
The light that was our loveliest is ended—
We might have been.

LIGHT AT LAST.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A BROKEN WEDDING RING," "THORNS AND BLOSSOMS," "WHICH LOVED HIM BEST?" ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE shades of evening had fallen upon Charlford House; a soft west wind was blowing, whirling the dead leaves over the gardens.

In an upper room sat the frightened Netta and Bella, with Miss Gray.

At present they were bewildered by the strange astounding tale which Dick—dear Dick, come back so suddenly—had revealed to them in few broken words that afternoon.

The troubled day was not yet here. There was much to do before Dick and Neville could take rest, hasty arrangements to be completed for placing John Charlford in an asylum, at least temporarily, for the family medical adviser declared that he could not remain even for a day without the supervision given to the insane.

Whether he would ever recover, time must decide—at present he must be placed under restraint.

Then there was the family solicitor to telegraph to, and the painful necessity of deciding what was to be done with Filton.

Bad man as he had been, cruelly as he had used the power that he had so basely usurped, it was deeply repugnant to Dick to drag him through a criminal trial which could have but one termination—penal servitude for life.

The miserable culprit had not spoken since he had lost consciousness before his accuser.

A detective officer kept watch over him in the gun-room.

He who had been master at Charlford for so many years sat against the wall, his eyes fixed upon the ground as the leaden hours went by, conscious that those who had been his own servants pasted in and out eyeing him with contempt.

Perhaps the bitterest moment of all was that when a footman brought in a tray with refreshments for the officer and for himself.

"Here," said the servant, approaching him, "you'd better eat. You won't have such fare where you are going!"

As night came on several persons entered the gun-room.

His late confederate Lane was led in between two men. That he perceived in the hasty glance he cast at the opening door; also that Lord Wynmore, with Dick, came in, followed by the family solicitor.

These seated themselves by the table. Shortly afterwards a footman carried in a lamp, and then the solicitor spoke.

"Richard Filton," he began, "you have to hear the statement made by your partner in guilt, Horace Lane. It will now be read over to you in his presence, and you will be asked if you can refute it in any particular. Attend!"

The lawyer stood up before the table—the very table at which Filton, acting as master, had been wont to give the Charlford head-keeper both his orders and his wages—and began to read what Lane had set down.

"I, Horace Lane, in order to save myself from the penalty which the law can inflict on me, make the following avowal before witnesses who can attest the reasons which force me to it—

"More than fifteen years ago, having spent a considerable fortune in gambling and horse-racing, I evaded my creditors by going to the West Indies, and there passed by a feigned name. I was a widower, and had a daughter ten years of age; my wife had died broken-hearted. Want of means made me desperate, and at this time I got into a quarrel with two acquaintances, and received a fall which produced a serious illness.

"The doctors gave me up; I believed myself dying, and that my little girl would be an orphan and a beggar. It was not particularly pleasant to me either to look back or to look forward.

"As I lay one day on my bed, trying to frame a letter to a distant cousin, asking him to do something for my little girl, a request which I was morally certain would not be entertained, a man with whom I had some slight business transactions—I dealt in horses at this time—came to see me. He had heard that I was dying, he knew that I was clever and unscrupulous. He had been present one day when I had boasted that I could imitate any handwriting, and draw up any document as well as a skilled lawyer. We were alone; he reminded me of what I had once said in his presence.

"'Draw up a will such as I shall dictate,' he whispered, 'and sign it with this signature, and you shall have four thousand pounds—a nice provision for your penniless child.'

"'Make it eight thousand, and the thing is done!' I cried.

"He agreed, and I did as he required, and he paid the money; but the will, after all, was not exactly such as he desired. For a strange thing happened—a mischance, or rather something which was hardly a mischance.

"We had together drawn up the will. I had shown him with what ease I could imitate his cousin's handwriting and signature—for it was from a millionaire cousin, a Mr. Charlford, an Englishman, that my tempter, John Charlford, was to inherit a fortune by means of the forged will: otherwise, as he knew, the bulk of the property would go to his half-brother and his children. It was not supposed at this time that I should live another fortnight; and there was need of haste, for the wealthy cousin, Mr. Charlford, was dying too.

"We had met for a last conference in the common lodging-house where I was staying, we two alone, as we supposed, and we discussed, in low but clear tones, the details of the will. All was decided on when, without a moment's preparation, we were confronted by a witness to our scheme.

"Not easily shall I forget my sensations when a man entered from an inner room, where he had been sleeping off a drunken bout, and faced us both.

"'You will have to alter that will,' he said. If you do it in such manner as I shall dictate, you will both be sure of what you want—wealth. But I must be sure of my share too; and there is plenty for me. One of those houses must be mine. I will draw up a new will for you to sign. Come—I will write, and you shall sign.'

"We were thunderstruck; the stranger was the most resolute villain I have ever met. John Charlford knew the man as an acquaintance, they had met several times, and he had more than once spoken of the singular likeness which this man bore to the half-brother who had accompanied him to the West Indies, and who then lay ill of yellow-fever.

"It was known that this brother must die, and so Filton insisted on personating Richard Charlford and inheriting his portion under the will. Everything favored the deception; John Charlford struggled hard to make easier terms, but in vain, for he was always a weak man while under the other's influence.

"That night the real Richard Charlford died; and the traitorous half-brother concealed the fact from his friends in England, and buried Richard under an assumed name, the people of the house where he had lived never knew his name. Then John Charlford imparted to Filton details of the Charlford annals, also the facts that Mrs. Richard Charlford had lately died and that her children were mere infants who had not seen their father for many months, adding that, when the man who was to personate the deceased should return to England, he must take possession of a place far removed from Richard Charlford's old home, while John Charlford himself meant to transact all business for his supposed brother, on the plea that the latter was strangely changed, owing to grief at the loss of his wife, added to an attack of yellow-fever.

"When all had been done to enable them to carry out this nefarious scheme, John Charlford went back to England alone, returning some months later to fetch home, as was believed, his suffering brother. The forged will was never disputed. It had not been expected that the wealthy Mr. Charlford would bequeath the Court to his cousin John; but the latter had been much with him, and very attentive during his last illness; and, after all, the chief family estate had been left to Richard, the expected heir.

"In place of the five thousand pounds which he would have received by the real will, the one fraudulently drawn up in the West Indies gave John Charlford the fine estate called the Court.

"Unfortunately for him, he had to take me into the bargain; and I have always cost him dear. To be sure that was not the case just at first. I received the hush-money, went to Oregon, and prospered. Would that I had stayed there! I ought to have explained that, contrary to all expectations, I recovered from my illness; John Charlford had thought that I should never live to tell the tale of his dishonesty.

"Some years elapsed. I never dreamed that the forged will had conferred more than a moderately handsome income and a comfortable dwelling on each of the half-brothers. Chance revealed to me my mistake.

"Charlford House was a mansion with a park and hundreds of acres of land attached to it; the Court was a handsome residence only second to Charlford House. The man who told me this came from the neighborhood, and knew how high the Charlfords ranked in the county. I was always in want of money, and the news about the wealth of the Charlfords came at a time when my funds were very low. I resolved to go to England and see for myself.

"I went, I reconnoitred for myself, and then communicated with both my former friends. Neither of them, I imagine, has derived much enjoyment from his wealth since that day. Filton is a proud man, and I delighted to humble him. I used to make all sorts of vexatious unnecessary stipulations with him; I insisted that he should introduce me into London society, under the guise of an American friend.

"He was very unwilling to comply, but he did take me to the houses of one or two London acquaintances; and it was in this way that one evening, at a large social gathering, I met, in his absence, his supposed daughter, Miss Caroline Charlford.

"I thought at once that she might be useful to me; and even on that night I feigned a deep admiration for her. She was to go to the seaside the next day with the governess and her young sisters. Under pretence of sketching and of getting on better when left quietly to herself, she often met me, for I followed her, and soon succeeded in making her love me.

"Of course I had woven mystery and romance round myself and my presumed antecedents; and I took care to keep my acquaintance with her so-called father quite secret. Believing in me as one of the noblest of human beings, and that I devotedly worshipped her sweet self, she often intrusted sums of money to me, which she supposed I disbursed in charity, meanwhile holding the opinion that the large fortune I was some day to inherit would be spent in benefiting humanity.

"For reasons of my own, reasons not referable to my business with the Charlfords, I desired to make it appear to certain of my acquaintances that my meeting with Filton to arrange about the money he was to give me was to take place at Frankfort; and I directed him to set out ostensibly for that place, to travel half-way, and then to return as quickly as he could and confer with me by the pool in John Charlford's grounds.

"From that day nothing went well with me. It seems that Miss Mabel Charlford witnessed first my meeting with the man whom she believed to be her father, and then immediately afterwards my meeting with her sister. As for Filton, he put off paying me the full sum I demanded; and I still think, though it is mere conjecture, that he meditated evading it by dealing with me summarily.

"I pocketed ten thousand pounds; the rest of the money that I was to have from him he undertook to remit to America within three months. He made me sign a paper incriminating myself which he imagined would give him a hold over me.

"His reason for making it appear that Miss Mabel Charlford had lost her senses is patent enough, she had witnessed another meeting between him and me, and heard words which induced her to break off her contemplated marriage with Lord Wynmore.

"To screen himself, it was necessary to assign a motive for her conduct; he therefore treated her as if she were mentally afflicted, even her own sisters believed her to be so. Her brother, Mr. Dick Charlford, desired to see her, but he was removed by fraud.

"There are people now living in Jamaica who would remember Filton, and help to corroborate my statement. I have also some letters which he wrote to me when I was at Boulogne and other places, or which he sent to John Charlford. Most of his letters however he got back again, bargaining that I should bring them with me on the night I met him at the pool.

"He did ultimately get them, but not before Mr. Dick Charlford had seen and read them, for I thrust those I meant him to have into a small box, and, not seeing him when I first got to the pool, I hid it under some dock-leaves. By a strange fatality Miss Mabel Charlford found this box and carried it away, imagining it to contain some flies for fishing which her brother had left by the pool and hidden in order that his uncle might not discover it.

"I wished to make capital out of the blind affection for myself which I had awakened in Caroline Charlford, and would fain have married her secretly, and taken her with me to America, by which means I should have become possessed of a willing slave, a valuable auxiliary in some plans I had set on foot, and have been master of her fortune, a handsome addition to the fifteen thousand I was to receive as hush-money. But I have a second wife still living; and therefore I meant to have gone through a make-believe marriage, which would probably have given me control of Miss Charlford's fortune.

"All these hopes are ended for me, a man must bow to necessity. My daughter, for whose sake I first was guilty of crime, is dead; I have now nothing to look forward to; and, in consideration of this simple and free confession, which will establish Mr. Dick Charlford in his rights, and free him and his sisters from the irksome control of a villain, I trust that I may escape legal punishment, and be permitted to return to Oregon, my passage being paid for me.

"Signed, in the presence of witnesses,

"HORACE LANE."

Filton had sat with his head bent down and his arms crossed during the whole of the time occupied by the reading of this confession.

As the lawyer ceased, he staggered to his feet, and stretched out his hand to entreat a hearing.

Involuntarily they looked at him, his rigid sallow face and fixed eyes forming a picture of despair.

"Suppose I were to sign a confession supporting what Lane has stated," he said, in a voice hoarse and grating, as if he uttered the words with difficulty; "what would you do for me in my extremity? Nothing for nothing in this world, you know. Would you let me walk out of this place, and help me to land in New Zealand, giving me ten pounds to start with? Consider well before refusing, Miss Charlford's name will necessarily be dragged into Court, and her folly exposed, if I am brought to trial. Can you forego your vengeance in order to save her name and yours from the jeers of the British public? I put you in undisputed possessions of your rights, acknowledge myself an impostor, and agree to let the law take its course if ever I set foot again in England." Then, looking at Dick—"Consult your solicitor, and let me know my fate."

Dick turned to Neville and the lawyer, and, beckoning to them, silently retired.

"What shall we do?" he asked anxiously, when they had reached the library. "My sister Caroline shrinks from being talked of; she will never go into society again if this story of her contemplated marriage with that man Lane gets abroad, as it must do if we prosecute Filton; and it is possible to us to keep it out of the newspapers, since the wretch who personated the clergyman managed, as we know, to escape in a marvellous manner en route for prison—it was an immense relief to me when I heard of it. As for the man who for so long has usurped my father's place, surely he will reap sufficient punishment. Vengeance is not a thing to cherish in any case."

Slowly the lawyer came round to this view.

"It is fortunate you employed private detectives in the other matter," he said. "Had you gone to Scotland Yard about Filton's business, it would have been taken out of your hands."

They talked a little longer, and then returned to the room where Filton sat with folded arms and fixed gaze, under the eyes of those who had charge of him.

"We agree to your terms. Write your avowal, and we will read and attest it; then quit this roof and the charge of these officers," said the lawyer.

Filton sprang to his feet.

"I shall not stand in the felon's dock after all," he cried. "Here—give me food—I can eat now—and give me paper. You shall soon be quit of me!"

They complied with his request, watching him all the time; and when midnight came the miserable man left the house which he had never had the right to enter.

"So ends this part of the play!" he muttered, as the vehicle drove away in the darkness.

* * * * * *

A year has nearly run its course. It is October now—a bright fair October, bringing sunshiny days and pleasurable social gatherings in many country homes.

Charlford House wears a new aspect since it has changed ownership—somehow the very walls and towers look more pleasant.

The hall door is wide open, and on the steps stands Dick, now grown a broad-shouldered young fellow, so handsome as to make it remarked by all his neighbors that "any girl might break her heart for his sake."

But Dick is not thinking of breaking hearts, but of healing one which has been sorely wounded—that of his sister Caroline, who has been during the past six months traveling abroad with Miss Gray.

Lord and Lady Effington have spent much of their time at Charlford House; they have also carried off Mab, Netta, and Bella to their bright home; for all the girls needed cheering after the revolution which had occurred in their lives, and Mabel above all could at first not realise the happiness which had dawned again for her.

She is now driving up to Charlford House beside her sister Caroline, and Dick stands watching at the hall door, with Netta and Bella—tall, pretty girls—beside him. Lord and Lady Effington are there too.

Neville is beside Mabel, watching her with adoring eyes, as an unspeakable treasure restored to him.

A lovely flush is on her face, a sweet rapture in her eyes.

She is soon to link her fate now with that of her dear betrothed, indeed Caroline has come back expressly for the wedding.

Next week the bridal bells will ring their merriest, and Mab will begin her life as Viscountess Wynmore.

Every one greets Caroline with tender effusion.

She is wonderfully softened and sweet in manner, and since her bitter disappointment she has learned to love her brother and sisters, and is loved by them.

"See, darling, how glad Neville and I and all of us are to have you back again!" whispers Mab tenderly when the two girls are alone together upstairs, resting before dinner. "We have ransacked the gardens and hot-houses to make your rooms cheerful; and you must promise me and Neville to pay us a long visit directly we get back from our tour."

Caroline bursts into tears, throwing her arms round her sister's neck.

"How good you all are to me!" she says. "Oh, Mab, there is one thing that I have never disclosed to you. I shall always think that that dreadful man Lane was a member of some secret society, and that the box he gave me to take to London was intended to do some fearful mischief, to blow up some public building perhaps, and that I was to be the unconscious agent. But can you believe that I was so infatuated with him that, when he reasoned with me, he brought me to see things in the false light

he threw over them? Has anything ever been heard of him, Mab?"

"Oh, my dear Caroline," answers Mab, "I had not meant to tell you on this first day of your home-coming, but I see I must. There is news, grievous news of that man! He was arrested in New York three months ago, and four other men with him, Brenley, Froyle, Joyne, and Bushel, on a charge of being implicated in a design to blow up various buildings. Papers were found on them all signed 'Revenge, if not success!' Oh, Caroline, you remember where Dick and I first read those words, also the names of the men arrested? It was on that paper which we picked up in the boat, and which so puzzled us. All is explained now."

"Can I ever forgive myself?" murmurs Caroline, as she sobs broken-heartedly in Mab's arms.

"For our sakes you must, dearest. Can we be happy while you grieve?" is the loving answer.

There is a sweet secret hope in Mab's heart that some one who loves Caroline even better than she herself does may in time cause her not only to forget, but to be happy.

"Is uncle John any better?" asks Caroline presently.

"No; there is but one opinion now of his case. He will remain insane for the rest of his life," says Mabel, with a sigh. Then she adds in gentle tones, "Filton has written a somewhat penitent letter from New Zealand. He says he is working as a navvy in order to earn bread."

"Oh, Mab, darling sister," cries Caroline, "from this time I will try only to make you all happy!"

It is a joyful reunion at Chartford House this evening, and more than once Caroline laughs brightly at some gay speech of Neville's.

She has left tortuous paths behind her—happiness is possible now.

* * * * * *

"Come and look at the stars, how bright they are to-night!" whispers Neville to Mabel, softly possessing himself of her hand, as the party rise from table and are crossing the large hall.

The lovers linger a moment or two behind the others, and Neville adds very fondly—

"This day next week we shall see the stars together on the shores of the Mediterranean, and you will be—rapturous thought—my wife!"

Something of heavenly beauty irradiates Mab's face as she responds to his words—

"Here or there, what matters it to me now, Neville?

"'For where thou art is home to me,
And home without thee cannot be!'"

[THE END.]

The Woman of Paris.

BY E. S. S.

THE Parisienne is a distinct type—a being of nerves, a wonderful bit of artifice, a product of the so-called highest civilization.

She belongs to all classes; she may be a grisette or she may be a grande dame.

The Parisienne lives in a whirlwind. Eager for amusement, greedy of sensation, the one unforgivable sin, the one insupportable circumstance of life is dulness; graceful, febrile, intelligent, superficial, alive to her finger-tips, she is always on the move—coming, going, here, there, everywhere—she has solved in her person the problem of perpetual motion.

She reads little, she studies less; but she observes everything, she participates in everything.

She is not exactly pretty; but she is piquante, dainty, distinguished in her air. A suggestion of mutinous coquetry marks her bearing.

Her talk is animated and incisive; her gestures eloquent.

She mingles her topics with a light hand, mixes philosophy with chiffons, politics with fashions.

She has a clear crescendo voice, a gay vibrating laugh. Her costumes are always beautifully harmonious, apt for every occasion, and sufficiently varied to suggest her view of existence to be a masquerade.

Her home, be it a single room, an apartment, or a chateau, is always cared for in every detail of its arrangement and becomes a characteristic background to her own personality.

Her impulse, in one word, is to make her life artistic, vivid, and emotional.

The Parisienne is alert from the moment she awakes. If she takes her chocolate and hot roll in bed, she glances over the Figaro as she takes this early meal.

Its columns bring all Paris to her bedside—its fetes and its charities; its scandals and occupations—she does not want more. Outside of Paris nothing exists for her. In Paris, she holds you live; elsewhere you vegetate.

The fashionable Parisienne has taken of late to sports; and horsemanship is a favorite taste.

It is chic to be a connoisseur in horses, to talk of their points, their diseases, etc., with the air of a jockey.

She is off early to the Bois de Boulogne. The Bois is the Hyde Park of Paris, and the Allee des Acacias its Rotten Row.

The Bois has its three periods every day. Society rides there in the fresh morning, drives there in the late afternoon just before dinner, abandons it in the evening to that section of humanity that is not itself.

Not unfrequently the morning is devoted to practising other sports, for society is somewhat mad just now after such exercises, and not a few fashionable ladies fence in the most bewitching and appropriate costume, using the foil with dexterity.

After these physical exercises comes a substantial meal, served at eleven, or more usually at noon.

The Parisienne quickly despatches this beautifully served and cooked repast, hurriedly drinks a glass or two of wine, and is soon ready to dress for her afternoon's campaign.

There are a thousand things to be done before five o'clock, when a universal tea-drinking takes place, shopping at the Louvre or at some other emporium of lovely things, seeing the dressmaker, attending an art sale, organizing a charity ball, or a bazar, rehearsing for some private theatricals, practicing with a celebrated actress to sing with chic in a concert given for the poor.

Taking an active share in the pretty pomp Vanity Fair keeps going in the name of charity, takes up a large part of the Parisienne's time.

On sale days at the Hotel Drouot, every Parisienne with any reputation for taste in art and trifles may be seen examining, discussing, criticising, speaking a technical jargon.

The Parisienne's fad is to collect curios, to see pictures, to talk art.

She haunts the studios; she never misses a private view; she patronises painters; she uses the studio slang; she adores Japanese art; she is a connoisseur in bric-a-brac, in buhl, in china; she collects everything; her home is a medley of rare, quaint, and beautiful bizarre objects.

This zeal for acquiring and surrounding herself with trifles animates every class of Parisienne.

The Parisienne drinks tea, either at her own house or at a friend's house, at five o'clock. Her weekly "at home" is the rendezvous for her set.

The etiquette that orders this gathering is stringent, as is that which rules every detail of her social code.

An informal five o'clock tea is set in the drawing-room. The hostess, who is dressed with elegance, but who wears no jewels, dispenses the beverage to her guests.

It is obligatory for the lady of the house to keep on her gloves during the afternoon.

At more elaborate five o'clock teas, the refreshments are served at a buffet in the dining-room.

These "at homes" are considered the grand opportunities offered daily to men and women to meet for the display of those powers of conversation which the French, at one time, pushed to a fine art.

After tea comes the drive in the "Bois;" then home to dress for dinner. After dinner, if it be a Tuesday, there is the "Francais" to attend.

Every Parisienne of note is in her box or stall on Tuesday nights at the classic theatre.

Some of the papers publish plans of the house at the beginning of the season, so that all may know the exact whereabouts of the seats belonging to the fair patronesses of dramatic art.

Another absolute necessity of the fashionable lady's life is her attendance at first nights.

The theatre enters largely into the composition of that brilliant whirlwind which forms the Parisienne's days.

After the theatre the balls, the evening receptions, and then the day is considered over. The morrow begins all over again.

Thus the Parisienne lives for three parts of the year.

When August comes she transports herself and her wonderful toilettes to the seaside; appears on the beach at Trouville, Deauville, Dieppe, in the freshest, most nautical fashions.

She bathes, swims, dives; she assists at races; she carries to the sea-side all the animation of Parisian existence.

Towards the middle of September she is in the country. Her country-house life is, perhaps, the most picturesque and vivid part of her existence.

The grape harvest gives opportunities for a display of rustic and seigniorial festivities all through France, and the ladies toil in force on such occasions.

It is the prettiest masquerade; the most countrified toilettes, the most rural tastes, become the order of the day.

Laborers are entertained by the landlords; and pastoral fetes vary the round of the hunting parties, and sports of every description, that fill the day, as dancing and comedy-playing enliven the night.

The Parisienne has taken to much shooting of late, and, gun in hand, she goes out to slay, in the early morning, the pretty denizens of the woods and forests.

We have purposely confined ourselves to the typical Parisienne, and have left ourselves but little space to indicate the more serious social influence some Frenchwomen wield in their country.

Illustrious men still delight to place themselves under the tutelage of accomplished and charming women, and the Frenchwoman still continues to be the most perfect type of the hostess.

Her salon is her best vantage-ground, for she understands how to give the color and note of her own personality to the social gatherings over which she presides. The splendid, if occasionally somewhat austere, salons of the upper ten are headed by that of Mme. la Duchesse de Rochefoucauld Biaccia, who, according to the Monarchists, is the greatest lady in France next to the Comtesse de Paris.

The widowed young Duchesse de Luynes, who has turned the family estate of Dampierre into a sort of mausoleum dedicated to her husband's memory, is the brilliant and artistic leader of a salon in Paris and in Cannes.

Beautiful girls always surround the hostess, and artists mingle with the aristocracy.

Among these drawing-rooms of upper class must be mentioned that of Mme. de la Ferronays, who is so devoted to antique customs that her domestics employ formulas of address in use in the days of Louis XIV., while at her balls are danced the old-fashioned dances in vogue among courtly beauties 200 years ago.

The political salons are of various colors; the Bonapartists are presided over by ladies who were notabilities at Compiegne and the Tuileries.

Of these, that of the Princesse Mathilde is the most remarkable.

Her Sunday "at homes" are anything but political, however, and are famous in contemporary Paris as *reunions* where all the wits assemble.

Mme. Adam's salon is the leading Republican social *reunion*. Gambetta, who acknowledged the influence of women, was the habitue of this fascinating lady's coterie.

But the brilliant editress of *Nouvelle Revue* overshot her mark, and in seeking to be a political power, turned her salon into a noisy and crowded meeting-place where all Paris assembled.

At the head of the literary and academic salons are those of Mme. Renan, the wife of the celebrated professor, and of Mme. Aubernon, an authoress of some distinction, who better than any one, it is said, in Paris, understands the art of leading talk, and that of making conversation a noble pastime. A group of literary ladies who have earned the soubriquet of "Carolines," being the ardent disciples of the bland and eloquent Professor Caro, hold literary salons. There are also musical salons, and refined Bohemian salons, to which the title of admission is the possession of wit or talent, and the doors of which are shut upon financiers and dullards.

A TENDER SUBJECT.—The story runs that kissing was introduced into England by Rowena, the daughter of Hengist, the Saxon. At a banquet which was given by the British monarch in honor of his allies, the princess, after pressing the brimming beaker to her lips, saluted the astonished and delighted Vortigern with a little kiss, after the manner of her own people. So well did the kiss thrive in the genial climate of England that it gradually grew into an everyday enjoyment, and the English soon became celebrated far and near as a kissing people.

In fact, so far had their celebrity spread in this respect that, when Cavendish, the biographer of the great "child of honor, Cardinal Wolsey," visited a French nobleman at his chateau, the lady of the house, on entering the room with her train of attendant maidens, for the purpose of welcoming the guest of her husband, thus accosted him: "Forasmuch as you be an Englishman, whose custom it is in your country to kiss all ladies and gentlewomen without offence, and although it be not so in this realm, yet will I be so bold as to kiss you, and so shall all my maidens." Whereupon the rafters of the chateau rang again with the heartiness of the osculation, no doubt to the great satisfaction of the fair chatelaine herself, her many and merry maidens, and above all to the modest Cavendish.

In the reign of Edward IV. a guest was expected on his arrival, and also on his departure, to salute not only his hostess, but all the ladies of the family. In fact, no occasion for bestowing a kiss was lost, and Shakespeare makes bluff King Hal say at Wolsey's banquet at Hampton Court Palace after he had danced with Anne Boleyn, "I were unmannerly to take you out and not to kiss you."

From England kissing found its way here, though it is to be regretted, remarks a contemporary, that the fathers of the country were altogether too Puritanical to give the pastime full swing. It was to be done decorously and in order, and woe betide the loving husband who dared to invade the sanctity of the Sabbath by kissing his wife on that day.

To such a degree had the practice of kissing attained in England that ladies were accustomed to use kissing comfits, composed of ambergris and other ingredients, for the purpose of sweetening their breath. These, beyond all question, were the forerunners of the cachous and other objectionable things with which the ladies of the present day taint their breath. "Their breaths with sweetmeats tainted are," says Mercutio.

When Whitelocke was the ambassador of Oliver Cromwell to the court of Christina of Sweden, the queen one day, accompanied by her ladies, dined with him, and Majesty, nothing loth, perhaps, for a lesson, commanded the ambassador to teach her suite the English mode of salutation. Whitelocke fell to work at his pleasing task immediately, and, after a few "coy and pretty defences" from his pupils, soon found in them the most apt of scholars, ready to carry out his instructions to the letter.

But the custom of universal kissing in England fell into disuse. In the time of those ascetic monarchs, William and Mary, it was very little practiced, and from that time onwards greatly declined, until at last it was practiced between unmarried people only on occasions—such, for instance, as when a beauty is caught asleep, or under the mistletoe.

Scientific and Useful.

RUST ON METALS.—Boiled linseed-oil will keep polished metals from rusting if it is allowed to dry on them.

BELTS.—Clean and oil leather belts without taking them off their pulleys. If taken off, they will shrink; then a piece must be put into them and removed again after the belt has run a few days.

DRILLS.—A Carson mint employe has discovered that drill points heated to a cherry red and tempered by being driven into a bar of lead will bore through the hardest steel or plate-glass without perceptibly blunting.

WHISTLES.—Melodious-sounding electric whistles are a novelty, and are said to be taking the place of electric bells in France. The whistle is made by fitting a small brass tube with suitable apertures so that it opens against the spring of a suitably formed communicator.

CLEANING CLOTH, ETC.—To cleanse spots from broadcloth or woollen goods take half an ounce each of glycerine, alcohol and sulphuric ether, two ounces of aqua ammonia, half an ounce of powdered castile soap, and add water enough to make one quart of the mixture. Use with brush or sponge and rinse with pure water.

METAL FOR BOOKBINDING.—Metal is now being substituted for cardboard in bookbinding. It consists in the use of thin sheet-metal for covers. The metal is specially prepared, and the cover may be bent and straightened again without perceptible damage. It may, in fact, be safely subjected to such treatment as would destroy ordinary covers. The metal is covered with the leather usually employed in bookbinding, and the finished book presents no difference in appearance except in the greater thinness of the cover.

TO CUT HOLES IN GLASS.—Holes in plate or window glass may be cut with a diamond by making a disk of wood and using it as a guide to the diamond. It requires a delicate touch to make the first cut so that a crack will not start outwardly therefrom; but, when properly cut, so that the crack can be seen all around the circle, the glass can be gently tapped with a small piece of wood directly under the cut, when the fracture will run through the glass and follow the tapping all around the circle. When the separation is complete, the centre may be gently pushed out. If it should appear to be interlocked or dovetailed, a few cuts across the centre will enable it to be taken out in pieces.

Farm and Garden.

THE MANGER.—If the manger or feed-box in stables be so foul as to emit a sour smell from any cause, it should be carefully cleansed and washed with a solution of soda or potash until perfectly sweet again.

THE WALNUT.—A black walnut tree in Michigan lately sold for $215. No doubt if the young trees were planted in rows forty feet apart each way and cultivated they would be valuable as a special crop, as twenty-five trees could thus be grown on one acre. Though late, the returns would be sure, and unused land could be profitably devoted to them.

WOOD ASHES.—If wood ashes are to be applied to the soil they should be kept dry until used, and for the reason that their constituents are readily soluble in water; and no substance, until it is taken up by moisture, is available as plant food. The proper application, therefore, of ashes, whether leached or unleached, is on the surface. The same is true of air-slaked lime. But it is better that these be harrowed in. Both ashes and lime have the effect to consolidate light, fluffy soils, and also to render more open heavy soils.

STABLES.—Nothing will purify and keep a stable so free from odors as the free use of dry earth, and every one keeping horses or cattle will find it pays to keep a heap of it at hand, to be used daily. A few shovelfuls of earth scattered over the floor after cleaning will render the air of the stables or sheds pure and wholesome. The value of the season's manure-pile may be largely increased by the free use of such absorbents. The strength of the gases and liquids absorbed is retained, and is the very essence of good manure.

HINTS.—Marl, half a peck to a hill, is highly recommended for blackberry bushes. If that cannot be obtained, use loam. It is bad for young trees to have wheat, oats or clover growing about their roots. Keep the ground clean by use of the hoe. A new, cheap and effective insect killer is said to be composed of one part muriate of potash in one thousand parts of water. Kerosene excels for softening and clearing out the gummed and hardened oil in the boxes of mowers, reapers and others farm machinery.

USEFUL TIMBER.—The Scotch pine, on poor but deep sands on the Western prairies, will make useful timber sooner than the white pine. The white pine was introduced into Germany on large areas about ninety years ago. Growing with great rapidity and yielding astonishing quantities of wood per acre, the quality of the wood was found to be very inferior until recent years. Experiments have lately shown that the white pine requires ninety years to make wood of as good quality as the Scotch pine will produce in seventy years under similar conditions, just as different grains will require different lengths of season in which to mature.

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The Rule of Fashion.

There is no despotism existing on earth more watchful or more exacting than Mrs. Grundy's, the personification of Fashion. All other forms of government, however severe, content themselves with prescribing rules for the larger and more external affairs of life; they leave the mass of their subjects comparatively free from interference in their own homes and their own minor domestic relations. But Mrs. Grundy, that inexorable potentate, has devised for us all a method of government which never nods and never slumbers

No legislative enactment could ever compel our women to wear clothes which they did not like, or to dress in bonnets which they did not think "so very becoming;" the sumptuary edicts of Mrs. Grundy, on the other hand, force them without appeal to array themselves at one time in inflated balloons supported by a solid framework of iron cages, at another to encase themselves in tightly-clinging skirts which clog the feet and impede the movements, and at a third to burden themselves on all their ways with five yards of dangling train behind, which seems to be provided, like the coat-tails at Donnybrook, on purpose for somebody else to tread upon. Statutes would be powerless to effect as much; Mrs. Grundy wills it, and ten thousand knees bow down at once obediently before her.

And who, after all, is this mighty Mrs. Grundy? What is the royal descent of this potent sovereign lady? We know who she is and where she comes from; we can trace her pedigree back, without a doubt, to its primitive and demonstrable insignificance. She is just the neighboring farmer's wife in the play of "Speed the Plough;" and the good dame next door at every reverse of fortune, for good or for evil, exclaims to her husband in dire alarm, "But what will Mrs. Grundy say?" with the usual reiteration of a theatrical catchword.

The phrase caught the popular fancy when the farce first appeared, and "But what will Mrs. Grundy say?" became at once a stock quotation, applicable to all possible circumstances of life.

The world saw at once, with its usual acuteness, that each of us has his Mrs. Grundy; and not one Mrs. Grundy alone, but an infinite collection of potential Mrs. Grundys, all perpetually eyeing us and spying us with inexorable eyes and wagging tongues to noise abroad at once our smallest peccadilloes.

It is not without reason too, we fancy, that Mrs. Grundy has been envisaged by the popular imagination as a feminine rather than a masculine potentate. Nobody cares about Mr. Grundy—nobody ever asks what he will say, or inquires his probable views and strictures upon any contemplated action of our existence. Mr. Grundy, poor soul, is a mere cipher in the world for this matter, and Mrs. Grundy, his wife, reigns supreme in her own domain of law and morals.

Mrs. Grundy seldom objects to slander, to scandal, to unkind gossip, to selfishness, to self-indulgence, to reckless extravagance, to the cruel and heartless treatment of women. Ask her with an insinuating smile to backbite her friends, and she will promptly accede to your polite request; but invite her to clean her own shoes and she will suspect you of being an escaped lunatic.

Is it not curious that most people would rather commit a serious crime than wheel a bundle of clothes for the laundress down the middle of the Main street? Mrs. Grundy has settled that moral delinquencies count for very little comparatively, but that errors as to the use of fish-knives or napkins, of courtesy titles or distinctions, of certain words and terms and phrases, are quite unpardonable. To ill-treat your wife or to cheat your grocer does not greatly matter to her court of conscience; but to make a society mistake is to mark oneself at once as unworthy of Mrs. Grundy's high esteem or consideration. Truly a wonderful and punctilious old lady! How long will her supremacy remain unshaken?

A QUESTION seems a simple and innocent thing, yet it may often be a real instrument of persecution on a small scale. It may put a man into a position in which he must choose either to disclose what he would prefer to keep to himself, or refuse to answer and accept whatever unpleasant results may ensue from such refusal. Every thoughtful person who wishes to do as he would be done by will abstain from placing another in such a dilemma. All good conversation demands careful consideration of the feelings of others. Where there is the least suspicion that certain subjects may be unpleasant or certain inquiries unwelcome, no pains should be spared to avoid them. Of course this applies chiefly to general or friendly conversation. There are doubtless cases where duty compels investigation at whatever expense of feeling, but these are few and exceptional Flippant and thoughtless curiosity has no such motive to excuse it.

A PERFECTLY balanced character is seldom found. Each virtue seems to have its offsetting foible. Amiability is apt to be allied with weakness; a vigorous pushing character is often impulsive, harsh, and unjust. A reflective mind is slow to act; a prompt mind is often wrong. So through all the elementary characters. All the qualities that go to make up a perfect moral nature rarely appear in one person. The physical and intellectual do not always evenly balance. There are those possessed of stronger moral than mental nature. They constitute the spasmodic, impulsive element in society. There are others whose intellects so absolutely control their moral nature that nothing is admitted that cannot be reasoned out satisfactorily. There are persons whose strong animal natures, dominate all else; both mind and spirit are subservient. To regulate all these parts so as to attain a fair degree of equality is the right step toward securing what may be called balance in character.

A LARGE proportion of the unhappiness, the ignorance, the loss of property, and even the loss of life that is endured in the world is to be directly traced to the hurry and drive which characterize so much of the labor performed. The chief motives that lead men to this practice are the ambition to accomplish impossibilities and the desire to make up for lost time. Industrious people who lack judgment and forethought often undertake more than they can do, and in trying to resist the inevitable they come to grief. On the other hand, the idle or self-indulgent, conscious of having wasted or misappropriated hours that should have been consecrated to labor, try to subvert nature's inexorable law by hurried efforts in the remnant of time left to them. Only stern experience can teach them that all such hopes are vain, that each hour has its own mission to fulfil, and that, if once lost, it is lost for ever.

THERE is a vast quantity of insincere praise passing current, like false coin, and proving as ruinous in its ultimate results. It may all be summed up under the word "flattery," though the motives which prompt it are various. Sometimes it is dealt out with the conscious intention of producing such an influence as will subserve the flatterer's purposes and interests. Simple and undiscriminating people, captivated by these appeals to their vanity, fall an easy prey to the snares thus laid for them, and become willing tools in the hands of the selfish and unscrupulous. With such counterfeit coin are votes and offices bought, wrong-doing of every kind bargained for, and often the utmost misery and ruin of mind and body consummated. This is at once the very worst and the very meanest use to which praise can be put.

THERE are two ways of treating every subject and of following every pursuit—the one by upholding the great underlying principle involved, or the truth for which all efforts are to be made; the other by aiming directly at the practical benefits which it is hoped such efforts will gain for the individual or for society. The one deals with abstract conceptions of right, of duty, of truth; the other with practical and limited ideas of definite results. The one takes a large view and has a far-reaching aim; the other is of necessity narrower and more immediate. Both of these purposes should as far as possible be united in every intelligent pursuit; but it makes a great deal of difference which has the first and which the second place.

MOST of us can be rendered very unhappy by unkindness, the loss, the faults, even the coldness of those we love; but it is certainly true that no one was ever yet made utterly miserable except by himself. Marcus Aurelius wisely tells us to "remember on every occasion which leads thee to vexation to apply this principle—that this is not a misfortune, but that to bear it nobly is good fortune;" and he elsewhere observes that "we suffer much more from the anger and vexation which we allow acts to rouse in us than we do from the acts themselves at which we are angry and vexed."

THE path of truth is a plain and safe path; that of falsehood is a perplexing maze. After the first departure from sincerity it is not in your power to stop. One artifice unavoidably leads on to another, till, as the intricacy of the labyrinth increases, you are left entangled in your own snare.

WE have certain work to do for our heads, and that is to be done strenuously; other work to do for our delight, and that is to be done heartily; neither is it to be done by halves or shifts, but with a will; and what is not worth this effort is not to be done at all.

LEARN from the earliest days to inure your principles against the perils of ridicule; you can no more exercise your reason if you live in the constant dread of laughter, than you can enjoy your life if you are in the constant terror of death.

A GREAT deal of virtue—at least of the outward appearance of it—is not so much from any fixed principle, as the terror of what the world will say, and the liberty it will take upon the occasions we shall give.

SINCE nothing below man can so think, man in being thoughtless must needs fall below himself. And that, to be sure, such do, as are unconcerned in the use of their most precious time.

THE greatest luxury of riches is that they enable you to escape so much good advice. The rich are always advising the poor; but the poor seldom venture to return the compliment.

A SOOTHING temper and an obliging disposition, when combined with honesty and industry, are invaluable qualities in every one who has his way to make in the world.

GENEROSITY that is self-conscious and calculating ceases to be generosity; it is only when it does good, hoping for nothing again, that it is worthy of the name.

NUMBERS are every day taking more pains to be well spoken of than what would actually enable them to live so as to deserve it.

The World's Happenings.

Boston has a kindergarten for the blind.

"Bike" is now the recognized term for bicycle.

Huron, Dakota, has organized a "Homely Man's Club."

To kill a dove is a sign of death to the negroes of Louisiana.

One of the attractions in a St. Louis dime museum is a tattooed hog.

The flesh of rattlesnake when cooked is as white as milk and very delicate.

A fifth wheel, for use on light vehicles, has been invented by a Keokuk, Iowa, man.

A Pennsylvania magistrate who had united 7,000 couples in marriage died recently.

A vineyardist in Napa Valley, Cal., has committed suicide by jumping into a cask of wine.

Count de la Caresetery, a member of an old French noble family, has been arrested for picking pockets in Paris.

If the natives of the Friendly Islands suffer from a spreading ulceration they have the limb cut off with a sharp shell.

In Washington last week a prisoner passed off a counterfeit dollar on a police magistrate in payment of the fine imposed.

An Arkansas man made a bullet out of a piece of plug tobacco and shot it through the body of a wild cat. The animal died.

The loss of life in India from wild beasts and snakes is still enormous; 11,822 persons were killed in Bengal alone during 1885-86.

A bill has passed both branches of the Connecticut Legislature providing for the permanent incarceration of incorrigible criminals.

A Topeka woman made $1,400 recently without leaving the kitchen. She invented an egg-beater, and sold the idea for that amount.

A bill prohibiting the taking on of more passengers than seats can be provided for on the street cars of New York, is before the legislature at Albany.

Martin Collins is a 93-year-old cobbler who works at his trade every day in East Boston. He is said to work without spectacles and to enjoy robust health.

Two colored ladies managed to call out the Atlantic City fire department the other evening by indulging in a fight, with lighted coal oil lamps as the weapons.

When the time came for Theodore Baker to let the sheriff of Las Vegas know that he was ready to be hanged he said: "Let her go, Gallagher," and died without a struggle.

A young lady who was bitten in the arm some weeks ago by a rat on a plantation in Porto Rico has since died at the College Hospital, in New London, Conn., from blood poisoning.

The invention of the war cycle, a velocipede that carries ten soldiers, is considered so valuable in England that they are to build one for 20 men, 10 to work the cycle and 10 to ride.

A police officer in Jersey City, the champion runner of the force, has a dog that has more than once assisted in capturing a fugitive by running between the latter's legs and tripping him.

An attraction at a concert given in a church in New York the other night was a "whistling soloist," a woman whose performances received praise from the newspapers next day.

The people of Bronson, Mich., draped the lamp-posts in mourning the other night and suspended paper lanterns from them, because the village authorities say they are too poor to furnish street lights.

A calf belonging to D. B. Stevens, of Cassville, Wis., was picked from the track by a passing train and carried on the cow-catcher to a point opposite the stable, when it jumped off, not in the least harmed.

A young farmer in Georgia hires a negro to plow, and in order to see that no time is fooled away he rides the mule so as to face the plowman, carrying an umbrella over his own head and using a big fan in order to keep cool.

A proposition has been made in a London paper that the words "Way Out" be painted in large letters with luminous paint near the exits of theatres to guide the audience in case the lights should be suddenly extinguished.

The mortality of the globe, as given by a Continental journalist who has made the computation, is as follows: Per minute, 67; per diem, 97,700, and per annum, 35,655,825. Whereas the births are 38,713,000 per annum, 100,000 per diem, and 70 per minute.

Red seems to be the fashionable color abroad just now. Along the principal streets and in the parks one's eyes are constantly stung with the reflected flashes of the most brilliant crimson. Crimson sunshades, crimson hats, crimson curtains, and even crimson skirts, flash and flare wherever one's look is turned.

A 10-mile railroad running between Hillsboro and Chapel Hill, N. C., has a president, three vice-presidents, a secretary, an auditor, a general traffic manager, a general freight agent, a general ticket agent, a purchasing agent, a superintendent of motive power, and an assistant general manager—thirteen officers in all.

Two Boston boys ran away from home last week, carrying with them a large sum of money and a couple of ferocious-looking revolvers. They got as far as New York, when a couple of other lads took their pistols and money from them. Without further desire to look for bears or Indians they were then in meek mood anxious to get back home. Police officers took charge of them.

In Berlin two livery stable keepers are allowed to furnish vehicles for the transportation of persons afflicted with cholera, small-pox, typhus, measles, diphtheria and scarlet fever, and the police authorities procure vehicles upon telegraphic order, on application to their respective stations; but the use of any other hired vehicle (including horse and cars) in such cases is punishable by fine.

WHAT SHALL I SAY?

BY J. CASSELL.

What shall I say? How answer this?
Oh letter, little thing you seem
To wake me up from girlhood's dream
To thoughts of full life's woe and bliss,
To make the laughing rill a stream!

Shall I say "No?" Shall I distrust
My own heart's whisperings to-day,
And hear the world's hard logic say:
"Marry for wealth and place you must,
And surely this is not the way?"

Or shall I answer "Yes?" Put by
All doubts, all fears of future woe?
I will, I will, because I know
My heart speaks best that makes me cry:
I love him so! I love him so!

Left to Die.

BY J. BERWICK HARWOOD.

"RUTHERFORD, Rutherford! Wake up! quick, I say, quick!"

And, as he spoke, my French partner, Maxime Bertrand, shook me vigorously by the shoulder, bending the while over the rough apology for a bed on which I lay, wrapped in my wide mantle of striped, many-colored wool, beneath the low roof of our tent.

Very slowly, and with a sort of dull reluctance such as physical exhaustion alone can cause, I was awakened from my heavy, hard-earned sleep, and became conscious, not merely of my partner's anxiety, but of a terrific medley of mingled sounds, in which yells of pain or of dismay, hoarse shouting, and the trampling of horses' hoofs were blended with the frequent discharge of firearms.

I was conscious, too, that even in our tent a strange, ruddy light replaced the blackness of midnight, while, as I could see through the open doorway, there was a fierce lurid glare, as of a conflagration.

"It is the light from the burning camp!" hissed out my partner, excitedly, from between his set teeth, as he bent over me. "It has come at last. The Mexicans are upon us—Romero and his gang of cutthroats. You were right, and yonder poor fellows, who laughed your predictions to scorn, are now being speared or shot down as fast as the mounted brigands can do their butcher's work. All is fire and blood."

Yes, it was too true. I realized the situation so soon as I had shaken off the torpor of excessive fatigue, after my long day's work with pick and spade.

The Mexican robber chief, Romero—Don Juan Romero y Gomez was his boastful signature to the highflown letter of menace which he had sent to our gold-digging community—had at last swooped down, as he had threatened, upon Spaniard's Gulch, and plunder and murder were rife in our lately slumbering camp.

Our tent was, luckily, pitched on high ground and in an isolated spot, at some distance from the bulk of the booths and cabins that sheltered our late associates, whose cries of pain or of alarm now rang in my rudely awakened ears as the cruel work of the massacre went on.

"Can nothing be done?" I asked, grasping the revolver that lay beside my rough pillow and springing to my feet. "It seems unmanly to leave the poor lads at this pinch. Can we not——?"

"To fight is mere madness," eagerly interrupted my partner; "nor is there any chance, Cosmo, since no real resistance is made. The enemy are three to one, and the surprise is complete. I ran back to warn you. If some of the bandits espy us, all is lost!"

On hands and knees we left the tent, crawling in among the bushes and the long, rank grass, and keeping as close to the earth as possible, to avoid attracting the notice of the mounted lancers, whom we could see careering about, their ponchos and scarves streaming in the mountain breeze, and brandishing their spears as they chased some flying fugitive from the camp.

The glare of ruby light almost betrayed us as we pressed on, cautiously but swiftly, bending low and screening ourselves behind every available shrub and stone, until at last the red glow faded away, and we found ourselves amidst thickets of thorny scrub, and, following the narrow and pebbly track of a dried-up watercourse, at last reached a point some two miles away, and where, among the spurs of the hills, we felt ourselves comparatively safe.

We did not dare, however, to kindle a fire, but remained under the lee of a rock, shivering in the sharp, frosty air, until the first pink streaks of morning tinged the eastern sky.

Even then we waited, by the advice of my cautious partner, who had known these wild regions of New Mexico longer than I had, until the scorching sun rode high in the cloudless heavens, before we ventured to retrace our steps.

Our own tent we found, to our surprise, standing as we had left it; but no other of the hastily reared dwellings of our late companions had escaped destruction. The tavern—the "Lone Star Hotel," as its Texan proprietor loved to call it, and which was by far the biggest building at Spaniard's Gulch—was a mere mass of glowing embers, surrounded by the half-burned remains of tents and shanties, by barrels, chests, and dead bodies.

It was a ghastly sight.

"Bah! It is quiet enough now," said my Gallic comrade, with a shrug of his Parisian shoulders. "The robbers have ridden off with their booty, and have left nothing behind them but the dead."

"And our fate might have been as theirs," replied I, with a shudder that I could not repress. "Let us see, however, Bertrand, if none are left alive to whom we might possibly render help."

Such, however, did not prove to be the case. Twenty-three bodies we found and buried in a shallow trench beneath the turf of the prairie. Some, doubtless, had been entombed beneath the ruins of the blazing huts, and others had probably perished amidst the brake and broken ground, in the vain attempt to elude the mounted pursuers. It was not without sincere sorrow that I recognized the fact that our late companions, rough and reckless as many of them had been, had all been ruthlessly slaughtered, and that we two were the sole survivors.

What was to be done? To remain in our present quarters would be imprudent, since at any moment the deserted camp might receive a visit from some roving band of Apaches, whom we should be powerless to repulse. After some consultation, Bertrand and I agreed to remove our tent to a site on higher ground, some four miles off, where, in prospecting, I had discovered signs of gold even more tempting than those in the vicinity of Spaniard's Gulch.

The marauders had carried off in their saddle-bags, I need scarcely say, every ounce of gold that could be found in tent or cabin, and had rifled the store and scattered its contents broadcast, so that clothes, blankets, tinned provisions, kegs of flour and biscuit, maize and bacon strewed the earth. Buffalo robes, wagon harness, tools, and crockery and tinware lay heaped uparound; also ownerless. The few horses and mules that had belonged to the diggers had been driven or led away by the Mexican highwaymen.

"There is no fear of starvation for many weeks to come," said the Frenchman, pointing to the provisions that lumbered the ground; "and we may as well have the benefit of all this plenty, as leave it to wandering Indians or the wolves of the prairie. At all events, we shall wrong no one by appropriating what remains."

"No," I answered, shuddering, for the silence of a place recently so full of life and bustle weighed upon my spirits; "but, Bertrand, before we start on our next venture we ought to make sure that there is no wounded man of our late comrades lying in the chapparal, parched and feeble, and longing for help."

"Have your own way, Rutherford; you were always sentimental; bah!" was my partner's comment on my philanthropy; so we searched the bush, and buried three of the dead, speared in their flight, but found no living thing except a frightened mule that had broken away and got hitched amongst the thorns of the mesquite shrubs by the red-tasselled back-trappings that had been carelessly left on its back.

This animal did good service for the next four or five days in conveying to our new encampment the food, blankets, buffalo robes, mining tools and spare sackcloth, of which my partner's experience warned him that we should stand in need during a sojourn of which it was impossible to define the duration.

We two, Maxime Bertrand and Cosmo Rutherford, were the only two amongst the gold diggers of Spaniard's Gulch to whom the title of gentleman could possibly have been conceded—the only men of education and gentle nurture. Bertrand's antecedents I never thoroughly ascertained. Boastful talk is apt to mislead, but I am sure that he was the son of parents relatively rich, that he had been fairly well taught, and that he had mixed at times in the glittering, if dubious, society of the Second Empire. He was one of those gay, good-humored Gauls who swim easily with the stream, and he and I got on excellently well together.

As for me, I was simply a younger son, on bad terms—partly, but not wholly, from my own fault—with my father and elder brother, and who had come out, like so many impoverished cadets of ancient family, to win my way in the new world. As yet, I had been fairly fortunate; had made money, and saved it; and both Bertrand and I, who neither drank nor gambled, seemed to be doing well.

Our new halting-place was within rifle-range of the great ravine known as the Red Canon, the precipitous sides of which would have seemed impregnable to the hardiest mountaineer of the Alpine Club, and which bore its name in virtue of the crimson rocks—of porphyry, as I believe—which mingled with serpentine and gneiss to build up its formidable ramparts. The Red Canon is not very deep, as compared with some of those stupendous chasms, like gashes cut by the sword of a giant, which seam the face of the far southwest of America; but it is waterless, and therefore unfrequented by even the roving Indian.

For five weeks we lived and toiled, with fair success, before I followed up the track of a milk-white quartz seam, flecked and spangled with gold, which widened fan-like as it went, and led down, down, down, the bushes and thin earth once removed, over the steep lip, and down into the giddy depths of the Canon. And then, indeed, fortune seemed to smile upon us, for we had evidently stumbled upon a vein of rare value, and were growing rapidly rich.

"This 'strike,' as our late comrades would have called it, is as good as a run at baccarat, or a certain martingale on the black and red at Monaco," my French partner would say, rubbing his plump hands together, as he chuckled over the daily increasing weight of the bag that held our golden store, won by the hard strokes of my pick.

I say mine advisedly, because, from the first, most of the severer labor had in truth been performed by me. I was by far the stronger of the two, and so it came about that I delved and hewed at earth and rock while the Frenchman cooked, and washed and sifted, and sorted, bargaining, too, for our joint needs shrewdly, but with a gay good humor which seems the appanage of those born on the summer side of the Channel. So, descending the Canon by means of ladders of tough buffalo hide, we traced the vein from ledge to ledge, until it joined the great white seam which lay beneath. And every day the treasure grew and grew. Clearly the firm of Rutherford and Bertrand was a thriving one.

Yes, success seemed to be secured. The yellow dust, the bright, spangly pepitas, the nuggets, accumulated day by day in our growing hoard. And now we began to talk cheerily of our plans for the future. Of course, Bertrand's dreams were all of the only Paradise to which his materialistic fancy soared—of bright Paris, with its boulevards, and cafes, and club life, of Chantilly and Bullier. Mine were of a welcome at the old home, amongst the immemorial oaks of the ancient park, whence more than one of my ancestors had ridden forth in armor to die in battle against Scot, rebel, or the French foe, for our liege lord the king.

It was—I remember well the sultry afternoon, when the sun's glare seemed to hush Nature herself, and bird and insect were still—my turn to go down the cliff. I worked hard, and there were heavy lumps of auriferous quartz in the wallet which was slung across my shoulders, when, weary with toil, I began, by the help of the series of ladders, to ascend the steep side of the Canon.

Maxime must have been on the watch, for, to my surprise, he scrambled down from above to a stony shelf where, in crevices of the rock, stood wedged the two stout wooden pegs to which the topmost of the dangling ladders was made fast.

"Any news, Bertrand? Anything wrong?" I called out.

The Frenchman did not at once reply. He waited until I was some forty feet or so beneath the shelf on which he stood secure, and then deliberately knelt down, and, bending over the brink, flourished a bowie-knife, the bright blade of which flashed in the rays of the declining sun.

"Listen to me, best and most confiding of partners," he hissed out, in mocking accents, while his face assumed a fiendish look of spite and triumph; "listen! Did you think me idiot enough to be content with a paltry half, and be as a retired linen-draper, perhaps, at Autueil or Passy, when I could have all, all, at the cost of a brace of knife strokes? Dog of an islander, I always hated you. And now, comrade, I thus dissolve our partnership and send you to your death. So you may die!"

It was a theatrical speech; and dramatic, too, was the flourish of the bright blade of the bowie knife.

"Bertrand—comrade!" I exclaimed, half incredulous; "what, in the name of——"

"Die!" yelled the Frenchman, as with his sharp knife he severed the tough thongs of buffalo hide that bore the weight of the ladder. And then I remember but a vague, dreadful sensation of the dizzy fall from that great height, the vain effort to clutch at an angle of the red rock, and then a feeling of surprise as I found myself lying in the midst of a tuft of thorny mezquite bushes that projected their uncompromising thicket from some crevice of the giant cliff wall. Stunned and giddy from my fall, I was yet, as I judged, unharmed, and my brain was tolerably clear.

What had happened I could, by the aid of Bertrand's florid harangue, comprehend but too well. My treacherous partner had sent me to my death to secure for himself a double share in our recent profits. Doubtless he was watching and listening overhead.

As if nature were in league with my forlorn self, a splintered mass of stone detached itself from the steep face of the cliff, and fell, with hollow booming sound, into the depths below. I heard the quavering laugh of triumph, the hoarse "Good-evening, both of you!" uttered in coarse bravado, and then the retiring steps of my false friend.

How long I lay amongst the thorny scrubs I never knew. As little could I afterwards estimate by what stages, or how, I reached the safe earth, at least a hundred and fifty feet below the sort of eagle's nest into which I had providentially fallen.

Probably the wall-like face of the Red Canon was much less precipitous, and more plentifully supplied with bushes, saplings, and slabs of stone than was the upper part of it. At any rate, I found myself alive and unhurt amidst the jungle and boulders below.

What was to be done? Of course, to scale the terrific cliff above me was hopeless. There could be no escape, no redress, that way.

Bertrand must be left to thrive on his ill-gotten gains as best he might. Well for me if I could leave the Red Canon alive!

But could that ever be? I had spoken with old trappers, with veteran hunters, whose tales of privation in the wilderness should have cheered me; but they did not, for I had not their prairie lore, and was of European birth; and then, in the Red Canon, there was no water. The very Indians, the very antelopes, shunned this terrible valley.

By the light of a Mexican moon, broad and bright, and silvering the stones, until every rough boulder looked like a huge heap of frosted metal, I set out on my weary march; and, after short intervals of rest, I found myself toiling on, beneath the fiery sunshine of the South, through the waterless desert.

Perhaps, if I had been a seasoned rover of the Far West my sufferings would have been less, for then I should have known which of the strange-looking gourds and cacti that grew wild amongst the rocks, slashed with a knife, would have yielded a refreshing draught of lymph to my baked lips and parched palate.

As it was, I staggered on for miles and miles, enduring the agony of thirst, scorched by the sun, and weary with long walking, until at last the sight of a roving band of Comanches or Apaches, with the prospect of a lance thrust and a scalping knife to finish my career, would have been almost welcome. And then, hours afterwards, when I was weary and worn and half delirious with pain and fatigue, I thought that my dulled ears caught the gurgling sound of distant water. Yes, it must be so. There was the liquid murmur of a stream washing over its pebbly bed.

The sound lent me strength, as it does to the camel, half dead amidst the yellow deserts of Arabia, that scents the brackish water of the lonely spring. I pressed on, reeling as I walked, and half afraid that I was but the sport of the mirage that has mocked the eyes of many a dying wanderer.

But no; it was true. There was a rivulet running merrily on from stone to stone. But, as I gained its bank, all grew dark, and my strength failed me.

From that deathly swoon, from that utter exhaustion of a jaded frame, my awakening was slow and gradual. I was conscious of a refreshing, delicious coolness upon my fevered brow, as if water were being sprinkled upon it, and presently my half-opened eyes caught sight of a lovely girlish face bending over me, as I lay, helpless, close to the stony bank of a bubbling stream that ran cheerily past the porphyry gates of the Red Canon.

Could this be a dream? I thought, won-

deringly, in that desolate place. A lady, young and beautiful, with her well-fitting riding-habit and plumed hat, bent over me, speaking to me in soft, compassionate accents, while her horse stood hard by, his bridle hitched to the branch of a wild agave tree.

I could hear the silvery tones, I could see the pitying glance of the bright eyes, without the power to raise my heavy head or to reply. And then I must have fainted again, for my next memory is of finding myself propped up with pillows, and in bed, in the hospitable house of Major Bligh, a recent settler in New Mexico, and whose thriving rauche and handsome villa were in the neighborhood of the mouth of the Red Canon.

It was to Miss Bligh, Euphrosyne Bligh, as I presently learned to call her, that I owed my life. Had she not ridden up, on her gallant bay horse, to the pretty, flower-decked spot where the stream ran past the frowning rocks of the Red Canon—a favorite resort of hers—I should have died there, since my feeble strength was too far spent to permit of further exertion.

As it was, hospitably entertained and nursed with tender care by the kind stranger friends into whose merciful hands I had fallen, I lived; and after a severe attack of fever, very gradually recovered my exhausted vitality. That I soon learned to love the beautiful girl who had saved me was natural enough.

To my great joy, my love was returned. Major and Mrs. Bligh, who had formed a good opinion of their young guest, consented to our betrothal, poor as I was, on condition that the engagement should endure until my worldly circumstances should improve.

And there was some talk, since I could ride well and was fluent in Spanish, of my becoming a junior partner in the Major's cattle ranche, where there were half-wild Mexican laborers to be coaxed and managed, Indian neighbors to propitiate, and a quickly-earned profit to be made.

"Rutherford—listen, my boy! Can this be that rascally partner of yours?" Major Bligh said one day, as he skimmed the contents of one of his many newspapers:—'The *Golden Fleece*, it seems, from San Francisco to Havre, took fire off Cape Horn, a few of those on board being rescued.' Among the list of the lost is the name of a passenger—Bertrand. Now, 'Frisco would have been a likely port for your treacherous Frenchman to have sailed from."

And, indeed, as subsequent inquiries proved, such must have been the ending, by fire or wave, of my false comrade, Maxime Bertrand. Neither he nor his ill-acquired wealth ever touched the French shore. And before long came other news from the Old World.

A travel-worn man, wearied and excited by the rough incidents of life on the frontier, suddenly presented himself at Major Bligh's ranche, as a member of the legal firm of Pounce, Pontifex and Short, our family solicitors for three generations.

"My lord," he said, deferentially, "I must introduce myself under unhappy auspices. My name is Short—not that my name much matters, humble as it is—and I was an articled clerk to my esteemed principals, Pounce and Pontifex, until, since your lordship's departure from England, they generously took me into partnership. As it is, when they said, 'Hunt up Lord Hythe, if he is on the Rocky Mountains, or——'"

"But that is my brother!" interrupted I, as my pale face flushed crimson; "and I am only Cosmo."

"Beg your pardon, my lord!" said the little lawyer—"Honorable Cosmo Reginald Rutherford, second son of our noble client, the Earl of Lindore. And, by the death of your lamented brother——"

"Hythe is dead, then. Poor Alfred!—but how?" stammered I, half incredulous, but still sorry. There had been little sympathy between my only brother and myself, and yet we had been boys together, and memories of early years almost unmanned me.

"Killed by a fall from his horse in Leicestershire!" replied the little lawyer, glibly; "and, my lord—I am speaking of the Earl now—our valued client, is most anxious to see, and, I am authorized to say, to be reconciled to, your lordship, his natural heir, since the late fatal event. When I went down, before starting for America, to Castle Lindore, to receive your noble father's instructions, he was pleased to say: 'Tell Cosmo, if you please, Mr. Short, that nothing could so please my old eyes as the sight of that bright young face of his. I am an old man now, and he won't have very long to wait for his coronet; but I was mistaken as to Cosmo, and you may tell him so. If you find the boy, send him back to me.'"

"You never told me, Cosmo," said Major Bligh good-naturedly, as he came across and patted me on the shoulder, "that you were so great a grandee in your own country. I beg your lordship's pardon for suggesting that you should herd cattle and manage Mexican riders on my ranche."

"My lordship, if such is my designation," said I, with but a wan smile for I was weak as yet, "would still be very happy to officiate in such a capacity. Where was the use of my telling you, Major, that I was a younger son of a British earl? That I was a cadet of an ancient family, and that my name was Cosmo Rutherford, you know; and as for the future title and estates of Lindore——"

"They could not be in better keeping!" smirked out the little lawyer, as he rubbed his plump hands together.

On one point I was positive, and even stubborn. Even to please my father, whose heart had evidently very much softened toward me, as appeared by several subsequent speeches on the part of Mr. Short, I refused to go back to Europe unless I were accompanied by the beautiful bride whose heart, as a lonely and friendless adventurer in the gold regions, I had been so lucky as to win.

Our wedding was therefore hastened, and when the *Columbia*, a fast-steaming mail-packet, bore us across the Atlantic, my chief pride was to present to my father and my friends at the old castle my lovely young American wife.

That Euphrosyne won all hearts, and that I was deemed by all who had known me the happiest of bridegrooms to have won such a treasure in the wilds of that remote territory where I had so nearly met my death, may readily be imagined.

We live still under the same roof with my father, a widower, whose health is sorely broken now, but who has learned again to love his once estranged son, and who takes a delight in introducing to old friends, high and low, his brilliant daughter-in-law, Euphrosyne, the future Countess of Lindore.

An Impostor.

BY MILES BRADFORD.

IT was a cold afternoon at the end of December, and the mail from London to Edinburgh was crowded with passengers.

Many of them seemed to be returning home for Christmas, and, despite the intense cold, their faces beamed with pleasant anticipations.

On the train sped, faster and faster, as though it understood that its living freight were anxious to reach their destination; but at last it slackened its pace, and drew up at a station.

A tall man in a first-class carriage woke up with a start from a long nap, which had lasted almost since the train had left London, and went to the window to look out.

A bitter north wind was blowing, so he returned to his corner, arranged his rugs in a manner which proved him to be an experienced traveller, and, drawing up his collar, settled himself down comfortably. As soon as the train was off again he began to think aloud.

"Three-quarters of the way there," he said to himself; "I wonder what sort of a reception I shall have. If David is like what he was ten years ago I need not expect much effusion, and yet I know that David loves me more than most men love their brothers, only it was never his way to say much about it."

He relapsed into silence again; but his frequent glances at his watch showed that he was impatient to get to his journey's end.

Donald Macfarlane had been absent from his home for ten years; during part of that time he lived at St. Petersburg, but for the last three years he had been exploring with a party of scientific men in the heart of Africa.

His only living relation was his brother David, who had inherited the family estate. Mr. Macfarlane had left his younger son a sufficiently large income to enable him to carry out his own plans for life independent of any profession; Donald's heart had always been set on travel, and as soon as he came into his property he left home for adventures in foreign lands.

The two brothers were so alike that most people found it impossible to tell which was which, the only difference between them being that David was habitually grave, while Donald was merry and light-hearted.

It was now more than two years since Donald had been able either to write or to receive any news from his brother; his journey home had been very hurried, so that he had only written to announce his arrival on landing, after which he had travelled as fast as steam could take him without waiting for any reply, for he had a great desire to spend Christmas once more in his old home.

The train reached Edinburgh in due course; Donald quickly extricated his luggage from the piles upon the platform, and hurried up to catch the train which would convey him to the nearest station to his brother's house, from which he would have to drive. Once seated, his reflections began again.

"I wonder if I am much altered," he thought, "or if David and I are as much alike as we once used to be. I hope he will be at the station to meet me; but he can only have got my letter this morning."

Meditating thus, the train came to a standstill before he was aware. The little station, with its one platform and humble waiting-room, was unaltered since he had seen it last, and he lost himself in a reverie, which had lasted but a few moments when he heard a respectful voice at his elbow,

"The carriage is ready, sir."

He turned round sharply, and saw a liveried servant, who touched his hat without waiting for a reply, and, taking charge of the luggage, preceded him to a brougham, which was in waiting outside the station.

Donald jumped in, and before he had time to make any inquiries as to his brother's health, the door was shut, and the carriage rolled off.

A drive of five miles lay before him, and as it was too dark to look out for well-known objects on the road, Donald threw himself back and began to think.

"Poor old John must be dead, I suppose, for I did not know the man on the box. John might have altered, but he could not have grown young at his time of life. What a smart carriage this is! The footman knew me at once, so I suppose I must be as like David as ever."

His reflections were interrupted by the sudden stoppage of the carriage. He looked out of the window, and saw that they were in a small street with shops on each side.

After a few minutes the footman approached the window, and said, "Second post letters, sir;" then mounted the box again, and they drove on.

Donald had taken the packet of letters in his hand almost without thought, but on looking at the topmost one he could not restrain an exclamation of astonishment. It was his own letter announcing his arrival to his brother!

He looked at the direction again to make sure, but there was no mistake:

"David Macfarlane, Esq.,
Brechin House, Brechin."

The last words were crossed out, and these inserted:

"Malcolm Douglas, Esq., Airlie."

What did it mean? He looked at the other letters in his hand. "Mrs. Douglas," "Miss Douglas," "M. Douglas, Esq.," he read in a bewildered tone, then a light broke in upon his mind.

"Why," he exclaimed, "it's that old mistake again! David must be expected at this house; he has never had my letter; and these people have mistaken me for him!"

The absurdity of the situation struck him, and he laughed till the tears came into his eyes. But the question at once confronted him, what should he do? Here was he, a stranger, whom every one believed to be in the heart of Africa, suddenly dropped down in the midst of people whom he had never seen! As usual, he began thinking aloud.

"Two courses are open to me," he said—"either to explain everything and take my chance, or to act a little masquerade on my own account."

His eyes sparkled with fun at the thought, but before he could make up his mind which course to pursue, the carriage drew up at the door of a large house, and he was obliged to alight. He had hardly entered before an elderly gentleman came towards him, and exclaimed—

"Ah, Macfarlane, glad to see you! Cold night, isn't it? Only just in time to dress for dinner. Robert, give Mr. Macfarlane a candle."

Before Donald had time to make any sort of reply, he had disappeared. On arriving at his room, the footman unstrapped his portmanteau, and withdrew.

"Well," thought Donald, as soon as the door was shut, "I'm in for it now. If I *do* get into disgrace all round I must go back to Africa, that's all."

The light-hearted traveller whistled an air as he dressed. He had nearly finished when the thought struck him, "How am I to know which is who?"

This knotty question received no reply, for at that moment a loud bell warned him that it was time to descend. A sound of merry voices directed him to the drawing-room, which he entered with an air of easy assurance, and, to his relief, found that only a small party awaited him—the gentleman he had already seen, a lady of matronly appearance, who must be Mrs. Douglas, two pretty girls, and a young man sufficiently like them to prove that he was their brother.

"Now then," cried Mr. Douglas; "no ceremony to-night. Our company does not come till to-morrow."

"Lucky for me it does not," thought Donald, as he gave his arm to the young lady nearest to him. They were no sooner seated at table than Mrs. Douglas inquired, "How did your business get on, Mr. Macfarlane?"

"Very well," answered Donald, inwardly wishing that he knew where he was supposed to have been. One of the young ladies gave him the clue.

"It must have been very important business that could send you to London for three days in this weather."

These words led to a discussion on the weather, which gave Donald time for thought. This, then, was the key to the situation: David had been suddenly called to London, and so had never received his letter. He was evidently spending Christmas at a neighbor's house, quite in ignorance of the fact that his brother was on his way home.

But now the puzzling question arose, what had become of David? He had certainly been expected back this evening, or why should the carriage have been sent to meet him? but yet no word nor sign had been received from him. It was a mystery which he felt must be left to time to reveal, and he came out of his reverie as his neighbor exclaimed—

"Mr. Macfarlane, you grow more silent every day. I shall have to fine you whenever you sit more than five minutes without speaking."

Donald answered her in the same strain, and fell into conversation, in the course of which he quickly discovered that his new friends were comparative strangers in the neighborhood; they seemed to have very few acquaintances.

By dint of keeping to general topics, he managed to get on very successfully; only one little mishap befel him. His thoughts had been somewhat disturbed by the girl who sat opposite to him. Her serious grey eyes filled him with a strange feeling whenever he met them, and the grave expression of her face set him wondering what was passing through her mind.

He was watching the effect of the lamplight on her golden-brown hair, and comparing it mentally with a picture in a Roman gallery, when the merry voice of his neighbor broke on his ear—

"I must ask you for a fine, Mr. Macfarlane. You have been silent at least six minutes."

Donald looked at her laughing black eyes and comical expression, and could not forbear saying, "You should fine your sister, and not me, for it was she who stole away my thoughts."

The moment he had said it, he saw he had made a mistake. Nora pouted, and shrugged her pretty shoulders, while her sister looked at him with a gravely reproachful air which disconcerted him still more.

His confusion was relieved by the ladies leaving the room; but his troubles were by no means over yet, for he had hardly resumed his seat before Mr. Douglas said, "I don't know how we shall amuse you to-morrow; the snow is too deep for riding or skating; in fact, I am afraid you will not be able to leave the house."

"Oh, don't trouble about me," replied Donald; "so long as I have a billiard-table I can be happy for hours."

"Why, Macfarlane!" exclaimed young Douglas—"you told me the other night that you could not play."

For a moment Donald was disconcerted. He had forgotten the fact that he had never been able to persuade David to touch a cue. However, he turned off the subject by saying, "Oh, I don't play what *you* would call well, you know; but I am anxious to learn."

The conversation fell back upon the unfailing topic of the weather, and soon after they joined the ladies.

Donald had resolved in his own mind that he would make his peace with the reproachful eyes which still haunted his memory; so, on entering the drawing-room, he went straight to the piano, where Frances Douglas was singing, and stood looking over the music.

It was a plaintive strain that he could just remember hearing his mother sing in his boyhood, and as he listened the tears rushed unbidden to his eyes.

He stood silent when she had finished, and Nora, who seemed to delight in teasing him, called her sister's attention to him by saying—

"Mr. Macfarlane, you ought to thank a lady who has been singing for your amusement."

Donald looked up gravely, and said, with a thrill of earnestness in his voice, "Your sister has done more than amuse me, Miss Douglas; she has called up at her bidding the spirits of the past." Then, turning to Frances, he added, "Will you not sing again?"

He was disappointed to see her manner had become cold and stern the moment she observed his attention, and, rising hastily from the piano, she replied—

"I never sing more than one song at a time; it is Nora's turn."

Donald was obliged to keep his station by the piano until Nora had finished her merry French ballad, but he could not prevent his eyes from wandering to the corner where Frances was sitting half in the shadow, with her head bent down over a book.

He made up his mind to go and address her as soon as he could escape, but before he could effect his purpose the party broke up, and the ladies retired for the night.

"Come and have a smoke?" asked young Douglas.

"No, thank you," replied Donald. "I am tired to-night, and would rather go to bed."

As soon as he was safe in his own room he threw himself into an armchair, and began to think.

"I believe I have made a fool of myself," was his first reflection. "That is always my way; I follow a silly impulse, and so get myself into a scrape. I had much better have told the truth at once after all; now I have got into the mess and can see no way out.

"If I let the secret out now I shall be looked upon not only as an impostor, but they will none of them be able to imagine the reason which made me first conceal and then suddenly explain my identity.

"Now, if I wait till David appears there will be some sort of sequence in the affair. Yes, I must wait now, and see what turns up." Having settled this point, his meditations took a different turn.

"I wonder why that sweet-looking girl behaves so coldly to me; she looked at me to-night as though she would turn me to stone with that steady gaze. It is pretty clear to me that David has made up his mind that one of these fair ladies would make him a suitable wife; if I remember David aright, with his quiet, grave ways, and his staid manner, he would be frightened to death by Miss Nora's laughing eyes and her way of teasing a fellow. No, depend upon it the other is the one. Well, I must see what to-morrow brings forth."

* * * * * *

"What are we going to do to-day?" asked Nora at breakfast next morning; "it has stopped snowing, but we cannot go out of doors. I expect all the people will arrive, so we must try and amuse them this evening."

"We might have some charades," said young Douglas.

"So we might!" exclaimed Donald; "a capital idea."

"Are you fond of charades?" asked Frances.

"Yes, they are a pet amusement of mine," said Donald. This was true, but a floating idea was at work in his brain that he might in the intricacies of a charade somehow extricate himself from his difficulties.

As soon as breakfast was over the four young people betook themselves to the old

schoolroom at the top of the house and began to lay their plans. After several ideas had been propounded, Donald said at last, "if you will allow me to suggest something, Miss Douglas, I have an idea in my head."

"We are all attention," said Nora, and Donald began to unfold his scheme—

"I have just thought of an Eastern tale that might make a good charade. A magician, having a grudge against a man, changed him into the likeness of his brother by means of his magic wand. This brother was under sentence of banishment for some crime, but had managed to get out of the way. In the meantime the unfortunate Hassan was banished in his stead. About this time the king of the country died, and all the sentences of banishment were repealed. Narsif, hearing of this, returned, and, finding brother's betrothed overjoyed at his appearance, he proposed to marry her, to which the poor girl naturally agreed. On the morning of the wedding-day of course Hassan returns and claims his bride. The magician is compelled to undo his work, Narsif is forgiven, and all goes merry as a marriage-bell."

"Splendid!" said Nora; "but how do you propose to turn this into a charade?"

"I should adapt it to the word 'wanderer,'" said Donald; "making the first scene 'wand,' the scene with the magician, and subsequent banishment of Hassan; second scene 'error,' the return of Narsif and his acceptance by Margiana; third scene 'wanderer,' the return of Hassan. The spelling is slightly wrong, but that is always allowable on these occasions."

Donald's plan was received with much applause, and they proceeded to arrange details.

"You must act the magician in the first scene," said Donald to Douglas, "and I must be Hassan. In the second scene I must, of course, be Narsif, while the two sisters take the place of Margiana and her mother. In the last scene we must get you up to look as like me as possible; this I must leave to the ladies."

The day passed very quickly in the preparation for the evening's amusement. Donald found no difficulty in acting his part while all were so fully occupied. He had not yet determined in what way he would let his secret escape him, but he felt sure that with such a plot he could not fail to find a good opportunity.

The guests arrived through the snow in the course of the afternoon, and after dinner all were gathered in the library, across the end of which curtains had been drawn. The first two scenes elicited unbounded applause. The only drawback to Donald's mind was that Frances had resolutely refused to act.

The curtain was drawn back for the third time, and Nora advanced from a side door; her dark complexion and black eyes gave her a sufficiently Eastern look, and Donald had suggested nothing but a brighter crimson scarf over her cream-colored dress.

Donald stood waiting for the right moment to advance; he suddenly started, for the opposite door opened, and David walked in. He had his travelling cloak still round him, and seemed quite unconscious that anything unusual was going on. The spectators, being few in number, were grouped at will about the room, and, as he entered by one of the doors in the recess, Nora was at first the only person he saw. Donald drew back hastily out of sight. His brother's cloak was so like the one he had worn in the first scene, that he saw at once that Nora did not notice the change. She accosted David at once—

"I had begun to think you would not come."

"I should have been here yesterday," he said; "but was unavoidably delayed on the road."

"I thought you did intend to play me false," went on Nora.

"Play you false?" cried David; "never, while the world stands!"

The words were so naturally spoken that the audience clapped. David started, and for the first time perceived that there were other people in the room. Nora looked a little frightened, and stepped back. Seeing that the crisis had come, Donald came from his hiding place.

"My friends," said Donald, "allow me to finish the play. The wanderer has returned, and, instead of supplanting his brother, he is only too happy to explain that he is but an upstart."

"Donald!" cried David, in a stentor an voice, and the two brothers clasped hands.

Even now the audience scarcely realized what had happened. Questions and exclamations were poured out in quick succession.

Donald, despite his deception, was the hero of the hour; but his eyes were sufficiently disengaged to take in a little scene that passed close to him. His staid brother David actually dropped a kiss upon Nora's hair, and, when she looked at him indignantly, exclaimed, "I beg your pardon, but I thought it was part of the play."

"Well, old fellow," said Donald, as they sat together, "what do you think now of your scapegrace brother?"

David laughed. "I should be inclined to be very angry if it were not for a piece of good fortune you have managed to bring me. Nora and I have made it all right between ourselves to-night, but she owns that she could not understand your behavior, because, you see, every one knew what was going to happen."

"I am afraid to think what their opinion of me must be," said Donald; "but I hope they will forgive me."

That was a happy Christmas tide at Airlie, and it was not long before Donald heard Frances' opinion of his conduct from her own lips.

"I could not think well of you then," she said, "because, of course, I thought you belonged to Nora."

"And now?" asked Donald.

"And now," she whispered, "you belong to me."

Her Stratagem.

BY O. M.

IT is related that a young man of graceful stature and beautiful countenance resided formerly at Bagdad, where he was most distinguished among the sons of the merchants. One day, when he sat in his shop, a lovely damsel approached; having looked at him, she perceived written over his door these words: "There is no cunning equal to that of men, since it surpasses the cunning of women."

"By my veil, then, I swear," said she, "this man shall be the sport of female cunning, and he shall change this inscription."

On the next day she returned most richly dressed, and attended by many slaves: under pretence of purchasing some article, she seated herself in the young man's shop.

"You have beheld," said she, "the gracefulness of my person; can anyone presume to affirm that I am hump-backed?"

The young merchant was fascinated.

"I appeal to you," continued she, "whether I am not well-formed;" she then showed him her finely-turned arm and her face, which in beauty equalled the moon when near its fourteenth night, saying, "Are these features marked with small-pox? or who shall dare insinuate that I have lost the use of one eye?"

The merchant requested to know her reasons for thus exposing to his view so many charms, generally concealed under a veil.

"Sir," said she, "I am rendered miserable through the tyranny of my father, a sordid, avaricious man, who, though abounding with riches, will not expend the smallest trifle to establish me in matrimony."

"Who is thy father?" inquired the merchant.

"He is the Grand Cadi," replied she, and then departed.

The young man, in a transport of astonishment and love, shut up the doors of his shop, and hastened to the tribunal, where he found the magistrate.

"I am come, sir," exclaimed he, "to demand in marriage your daughter," of whom I am enamored."

"She is not worthy," replied the judge, "of so handsome and so suitable a mate."

"She pleases me," said the young man; "do not oppose my wishes."

A contract was immediately concluded; the merchant agreed to pay five purses before the nuptials, and settled fifteen as a jointure.

The father still represented how unsuitable the bride would prove, but the young man insisted that the nuptials should be celebrated without delay, and on the next night he was admitted to the chamber of his bride.

But when he had removed the veil that covered her face, he beheld such an object! May the Lord defend us from the sight of so much ugliness!—for in her was comprised everything completely hideous. He passed the night as if he had been in the prisons of Deylem, among the monstrous demons.

At dawn of day he repaired to a bath, and having performed his ablutions, he returned to his shop, and refreshed himself with coffee; many of his acquaintance passing by, amused themselves with jokes respecting the charms of his bride.

At length the lovely form of her who had contrived this affair, appeared before him. She was more richly and voluptuously ornamented than on the preceding interview; so that a crowd of persons stopped in the street to gaze on her.

"May this day," she said, "be auspicious to thee, my dear O nooyn, may God protect and bless thee!"

The young man's face expressed the sadness of his heart.

"How have I injured thee," replied he, "that thou hast in this manner made me the object of thy sport?"

"From thee," answered the beautiful stranger, "I have not experienced any affront; but if thou wilt reverse the inscription over thy door I will engage to extricate thee from every difficulty."

The merchant instantly despatched a slave, desiring him to procure from a certain writer an inscription in letters of blue and gold, expressing, "There is no cunning equal to that of woman, since it surpasses and confounds that of men."

The inscription was soon traced, and brought by the slave of the master, who placed it over the door of the shop.

Then, by the advice of the fair damsel, he went to the place near the citadel, where he conversed with the public dancers, bear-leaders, and those who exhibit the tricks of monkeys; in consequence of which, while he was sitting the next morning, drinking coffee with his father-in-law, the Cadi, they came before him, with a thousand congratulations, styling him cousin. The young merchant immediately scattered among them handfuls of money.

The judge was astonished, and asked several questions.

"My father," said the young man, "was a leader of bears and monkeys, such has been the profession of my family; but having acquired some wealth, we now carry on the business of merchants with considerable success."

"But dost thou still," asked the judge, "belong to this company of bear-leaders?"

"I must not renounce my family," replied the young man, "for the sake of thy daughter."

"But it is not fit," exclaimed the judge, "that such persons should espouse the daughter of one who, seated on a carpet, pronounces the decision of law; one whose pedigree ascends even to the relation of our prophet."

"But, my good father-in-law," said the merchant, "reflect that thy daughter is my legitimate wife, that I value each hair of her head as much as a thousand lives, that for all the kingdoms of the world I would not consent to be separated from her."

At last, however, a divorce was formally executed; the money which the merchant had settled was returned; and he, having applied to the parents of her who had contrived this stratagem, obtained the lovely damsel in marriage, and during a long succession of years enjoyed the utmost conjugal felicity.

A SPOOL OF THREAD.

FEW people ever stop to think of the twistings and turnings and the various processes that cotton fiber goes through after it is taken from the pods before it is wound up on a spool and ready for the housewife's needle.

The whole story is told, however, in a small space in one of the cases in the hall in the National museum given up to an exhibition of textile fabrics.

This is one of the many object lessons in the museum, which, combined, are intended to tell the story of a man as he exists on the earth.

First is shown a specimen of cotton in the pod just as it is picked, without having the seed removed. Next is shown a specimen of the same cotton after it has been ginned and the black seeds have been removed.

The Sea Island cotton is used for thread on account of the length of the fiber. A sample of the sacking in which the cotton is baled is also shown.

Then the cotton is supposed to have been baled and shipped to the thread factory. Here the first thing that is done with the cotton is to subject it to the "picker" process, by which the cotton from several bales is mixed to secure uniformity.

During the picker process much waste, in the form of dust, dirt and short fibers, are separated from the good fibers by the picker. Next the "picked" cotton is wound on a machine, in sheets or laps, into a roll.

The next process illustrated by a practical exhibit is the carding by which the sheets of cotton are combed or run out into long parallel fibers.

The cotton is next seen drawn through a trumpet-shaped opening, which condenses it into a single strand or "sliver."

Then eight such slivers are run together into one, six of the strands thus produced are drawn into one, and again six of the strands from the last drawing are combined into one.

Then comes the slubbing or fast "roving" process, which consists of winding the strand and bobbin. Two strands are twisted and again wound on a bobbin.

After a number of other twistings and windings, during which the strand is gradually reduced in size, until it begins to assume a thread-like appearance, two strands of this fine "roving" are run together and twisted, under considerable tension, on a bobbin that makes 7,000 revolutions a minute.

Two of the cords thus produced are then wound together on a spool, and then twisted from that to another spool. The two-cord thread thus produced is transferred thence to another spool, and then three threads of two cords each are twisted together, forming six-cord thread.

One who has followed the process sees the cotton gradually transformed from a wide band or sheet of loose cotton to a compact thread that will pass through the eye of a needle.

The six-cord thread is at last taken from a bobbin and reeled into a skein, in which form it is bleached or dyed. Then it is wound back upon the skein upon a big spool, from which it is supplied to little white birch spools, from which it is wound in regular courses, and is then ready for the market.

The machine that regulates the last winding measures the number of yards wound on each spool.

The spools are made of various sizes, to hold from 200 to 12,000 yards of thread. The labels that decorate the end of the spools when they are sold are last put on. They are cut and pasted on by machinery with great rapidity.

THE MOTHER-IN-LAW.—In Persia the mother-in-law flourishes as the active and revered head of her daughter's household, and is especially courted by the youthful husband. There the bridegroom-husband is allowed to make a present of his wife to his next friend, who dares not refuse the gift. There, too, the women have petitioned the Shah to shut up the cafes because they kept their husbands out late at night and otherwise demoralized them, and his Majesty at once ordered the saloons to be abolished.

WHAT WERE THEY?—A man who recently invested in some sausages says that when he got them home he cut them apart, and left them. In the morning he visited them. Three of them were twisted up together and were sleeping sweetly; two had crawled to the milk-bowl and were lapping the milk; and one, a black and white one, was on the garden wall trying to catch a sparrow. He drowned the lot.

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

Thirty-two per cent., or almost a third, of the German youth are blondes; fourteen per cent. are brunettes; while all the rest, fifty-four per cent., must be classed as mixed. This mixture is not a homogeneous one, but includes all intermediate varieties. One class of the German population forms a decided exception to these averages—viz., the Jew. Jewish children show only eleven per cent. of blondes, but forty-two per cent. of brunettes. Their greater purity of race is shown by the small ratio of the mixed classes amongst them.

The full text of the lease under which an Irish-Canadian tenant who was recently evicted, has been published. By its provisions all improvements, no matter by whom made, belong to the landlord. Animals that run on the ground, and birds that fly over it—the rotation of crops—all these things are enumerated as the landlord's property, which the tenant has no right to use without his permission. The most productive portions of the land are in the pasture, and the tenant is not allowed to break a sod. He can only cultivate the most difficult and sterile part of the farm, and must not cut a twig without the landlord's consent. The tenant also covenants for his sub-tenants and their actions. Finally there is a bankruptcy clause which says that if he fails in any one of the terms of the lease he becomes bankrupt and all he possesses passes to the landlord.

The young Emperor of China comes of age next year, and will then take the reins of Government from the hands of his very clever mother, who has for years acted as regent. His name is Kwang Hsu, and he is regarded by all his subjects as a god. Even his mother worships him once a month. He lives in the palace of his ancestors, and sleeps in a huge bed which many of the emperors have used as a kind of judgment seat, and which is said to be a thousand years old. He is too sacred to be permitted to take his meals in company, but a staff of doctors is always at hand to say what he may and what he may not eat. His tutors kneel when they give him lessons, and they must be glad when the Emperor's daily half-hour of Chinese or Tartar is over. This kind of life is not exactly a wholesome one for an intelligent boy of fourteen. Yet, some of his ancestors, who were similarly educated, were as wise and great as any potentates of Christendom.

It is not generally known that about eighty years ago Prussia, as well as Russia, used to send exiles to Siberia. A correspondent sends to the *Berliner Tageblatt* the text of a royal ordinance, dated July 2nd, 1802, and signed on behalf of Frederick V., from which it appears that the Prussian Government had just concluded with Russia a treaty in virtue of which incorrigible criminals were to be shipped to the Gulf of Finland, whence they would be sent, at the charges of Russia, to a point in Siberia "at least a thousand miles from the frontier of his Prussian Majesty's States." A few days later a first batch of fifty-eight wretched people was thus sent forth into banishment. Prussia was well rid of her convicts, and Russia gained slaves; for the exiles were in accordance with the terms of the ordinance, "to be set to do the hardest work, without the remotest hope of ever being able to regain their freedom."

A duel between a lady and gentleman recently occurred at Warsaw. The latter had offered the lady his hand, which she refused, whereupon he spread abroad reports injurious to her good name. Several gentlemen came forward in a knightly manner and volunteered to avenge her by challenging her calumniator to a duel. She replied that if a duel was required in order to vindicate her honor, she conceived that she had a right and title to be one of the principals. The strong-minded damsel prided herself upon being a good shot, and resolved to punish her traducer, but not to injure him mortally. She sent him a challenge; he accepted it, and the duellists met in a place outside of Warsaw. Happily both missed their aim. The lady wanted to fire again; but her second assured her that full reparation had been made. Her adversary, moved by her gallantry, made an apology, which she accepted.

Switzerland, says a long resident in that interesting country, owes her agreeably grassy appearance almost entirely to the people—that is, the people were not excessively hard workers, almost beasts of burden, in fact, and if they had not tourists to help them out, they would starve. Men and women alike are the very hardest of workers, but I must testify to the almost eternal industry of the women. I really think I never saw one of them idle. They work in the fields beside the men, and they fully keep up their end of it, I assure you. Indeed, they do more; for when the men cease work in the field they do them rest, I believe, but the women do not. They then take up their endless duties of knitting. Everywhere when not working in the field and in the house, women knit incessantly. On the high roads and in the streets, walking, sitting down or standing up, by daylight and in darkness, they are ever knitting. The women of Switzerland, even, do not seem to be such industrious workers, such understanding slaves, as the women of Switzerland.

Our Young Folks.

THOSE BOYS.

BY K. KINGSLEY.

SOME mystery lay shut up in the Green room—of that Kitty felt certain; "and 'tis something about my birthday," said the nimble tongued, small maiden, with the importance of one who had such a red-letter day hastening and drawing near.

Her parents were away from home, and the servants were ahead of affairs there, so it was no use for Kitty to apply to the higher powers, for nurse held the key of the room, and guarded it, the chamber, and the secret something it contained, like a very ogress; and anon the red-letter birthday dawned.

Of course, soon after noon a body of small guests arrived, for a birthday without a party is a very tame affair in these cake-eating, tea-drinking days—three little girls, and one little boy; why only one cannot be told.

Jack said it was because it was not well to have too much of a good thing, which remark made the small mannikin hold up his head like a peacock, while all the girls flushed rosy red with annoyance that no compliments were paid them.

But now the supreme moment had arrived for Kitty. Nurse appeared with the magic key of the green room door; it was open.

They were steaming in after her, Kitty and her four guests, open-eyed, open-mouthed, to see—what? The sweetest of boy and girl dolls in the midst of a whole set of dolls' furniture, kitchener and range complete, and all the requisites for a lady's bed-chamber.

Kitty fairly screamed with delight, and her guests thought her far happier than a queen.

"A present from your mamma, Miss Kitty, wishing you many happy returns of the day," quoth nurse.

Then Kitty awoke as from a dream, and knew that it was all for her to keep—hers for her and her guests to handle and joy over the live-long day.

Upstairs, downstairs, into my lady's chamber, strayed she and her friends through the old house, the sweet new boy and girl dolls with them, the Lady Clara, Kitty's last new pet before these, tucked up in bed, and taking no part in her mamma's birthday pleasures. Ah, Kitty! such is life: old friends forgotten for new [illegible]

But now as the happy party strayed near the grand staircase, a smell of burning met them.

"'Tis like the smell of burnt hair," suddenly said one of the children, in happy ignorance.

"Yes, I am sure it is," said another.

"It smells more like a burnt doll," cried will from the stairs, where he and Jack, Kitty's big brother, were dropping down the banisters, and singing—

"'Tis well to be off with the old love
Before you're on with the new."

Only Kitty did not catch the ditty's meaning.

"What doll?" screamed she, her eyes growing round like a negro's in her great fright.

"And it comes from the way of the nursery," quoth Jack with a quiet, suspicious laugh.

Away flew Kitty, like a darling, scudding swallow, her friends after her, helter-skelter. Now screams, loud and long, came to the lads lingering on the landing; and no wonder. There was Lady Clara, suspended by a piece of string, in front of the nursery fire, swaying to and fro, like some happy girl in a swing, her long brown curls frizzling and burning all around her senseless face!

Kitty clutched her to her motherly little bosom, and fled, a wreath of smoke about them both—fled, fled, she knew not whither, while Will and Jack dropped down into the hall and made their way to nurse, busy laying the birthday tea, with the astounding tidings.

"Nurse, there's one of the youngsters upstairs burning her head off!"

"Mercy on us, Master Will and Jack, who?" cried she, fairly skipping off the floor in her horror.

"We didn't stay to see, but came off to tell you," said Will, which Jack endorsed with—

"Yes, and something must be done."

Done! Nurse was flying away with the fleetness of wings, and as she flew she cried to the page, whom she passed—

"James, ride to the town like mad for the doctor!"

So the lad in buttons, thus admonished, rushed to the stable, caught the swittest horse, and went galloping away to town, a very John Gilpin for grace and speed, Will shouting to him the message in passing—

"A little lady is burning her head off," in a maze of bewildered delight at the turn their lark was taking.

Meanwhile, downstairs came scandalized and indignant nurse, all hurry scurry.

"Go directly and fetch James back, Richard!" cried she to the footman. "'Tis only one of the young gentlemen's games."

"Where's the use? He's half-way to town by this time," returned Richard.

"Oh, dear! what will the doctor say?" was her lament to her fellow-servant, Jane; while wee Kitty above stairs, with the help of her friends, was busy airing sheets, and making up the new doll's bed for poor Lady Clara, charred and disfigured for life, who meanwhile was resting on her own arm-chair.

"'Tis only a birthday bit of fun," laughed Jack, still dropping with Will down the banisters.

"Well, I'd not be in your shoes for something, young gentleman," cried nurse.

"Nor we in yours, considering who sent for a doctor for a burnt doll," was the boy's retort.

"Wait awhile," was all the nurse vouchsafed to this, and hoped within herself that no doctor would be at home.

As for the lads, they shrugged their shoulders, half hoped the same themselves, and went off for other fields of mischief. But you may besure they put in their appearance at the tea-table, where they devoured cake and goodies with as keen an appetite as if no doctor's vengeance hung over their heads, and were as a savor of salt among the little revellers, with their quips and jokes and boyish banter.

Well, no doctor arrived, nor James either, so after tea the lads lounged about, whistling to keep up their spirits, and wee Kitty stole away from her friends, all along the silent corridor, to take one peep at her sick doll. But what was that noise which made her start? Of course it was nothing, and she tried not to think of Blue-beard and all the tales Will and Jack teased her with. No; she turned aside to smell a flower, and then went bravely on, her head erect with infinite courage. But ah! there—what was that?

Smash went the flower, the pot in twenty pieces, hard by the china closet, and two white hands clutching at, now the mischief was done, as if to save it.

The child's feet somehow carried her to the scene of the disaster, then came those clutching hands. She tried to run but her feet seemed chained; she could but stumble and flutter, like some wee bird half in, half out, the fowler's net.

Oh, horror, 'twas a giant—a robber, within the closet; she caught sight of something as the door opened. Was it coming towards her?

Kitty did not know, but her feet were unchained at last, so was her tongue. Now she screamed, a small bundle of shivers and terrors, and fled down the stairs into the servants' hall.

"Oh, I've seen a robber—a giant!" she gasped, like some small shaking, fluttering leaf, in the midst of the servants.

"Where, Miss Kitty, where?" was the cry, all hands aloft.

"In the china closet—a great big robber with white hands."

Richard, the footman, seized the poker, nurse the tongs, cook the brush, and Jane a pail of water, and thus equipped, they went to meet the foe, Richard leading the van, the others following after, Kitty and her friends creeping behind, and crying bitterly on the stairs.

"Come out of it, I say!" cried valiant Richard with his poker, peering into rooms and odd corners as he went along the eerie corridor, with its telling silence.

"There ain't no thief here, nor yet no robber. Miss Kitty saw her shadder," quoth he right loyally.

Ah, now at last he was at the china closet door.

"Your money or your life! Open and I'll fire!" spoke a gruff burglar-like voice from within; and if Richard was not frightened, his hair was bristling upright over his head with a sudden rush.

"Look him in!" cried she who wielded the brush, and he did, with a sounding click.

"Where are the young gentlemen?" asked sagacious nurse, and as she spoke up strayed Willy from the way of the hall and the grand staircase.

"Why, what's up here?" cried he as in astonishment.

"There's a robber in the china closet, and we've been and locked him in," returned Richard.

"Never. Here, let's have a peep," said incredulous Will, making for the door.

"Don't," said Richard, his hair bristling again; and Will didn't.

Up came Jack.

"James is come back from his doctor hunt, and Doctor Grove will be here. When——"

Here both boys laughed.

"When he has his soap lather ready," said Will, ending Jack's sentence for him.

"But about this robber?" questioned Richard, his courage fast dying within him. "A policeman is the lawful one to catch a thief."

"Of course he is, and James can turn his nose behind him and fetch one," replied ready Will. "In for a penny, in for a pound," said he in an aside to Jack.

"Ay, so he can," cried ready Richard as well; and away went too ready Will to find him.

"I should think 'twere another of our young gentlemen's tricks, if they hadn't come up so innocent like," remarked the nurse watching Will go.

"Well, innocent or not, 'twill be proved presently; 'tis no good to think to slip out of the clutches of a doctor and a policeman," returned Richard.

He and one of the maids stayed to guard the closet door while the others went below.

"Yes, 'twill be proved," assented Jack; then he and Will went behind the holly hedge to await the course of events.

Well, that course brought the doctor with two policemen in his gig; "took them up on the way, took them up on the way," the lads heard them say, creeping nearer the door behind the sheltering hedge.

"Well, little Miss Kitty what young lady has almost burnt her head off?" they heard the doctor say, she and her friends still on the stairs.

"'Tis my dolly, sir, and I am afraid she will die," piped a silvery tongue.

"Your dolly—eh?"

That sent the swift-footed doctor upstairs, the policemen following, the lads behind, wee Kitty in the rear.

Ah, they were all at the china closet.

"Now for the key," spoke policeman number one. "Have the handcuffs ready," said he to number two."

Richard grasped his poker; the two lads in the background grinned from ear to ear; click went the key, the door flew open, and then——

"He—he—he! Hi—hi—hi! Ho—ho—ho!" so the chorus of loud laughter rang out.

A bolster with somebody's night-dress thereon, sticks for arms, gloves for hands; this was the robber which confronted them.

"Hoaxed, sir, by two idle young gentlemen, all of us," spoke Richard in great disgust.

Ah, yes! it was a hoax; it was Will's doing, really. He had shaken the bobbing white figure at Kitty through the closet-door, knocked down the flowers, growled out his threat at Richard, then made good his retreat through a sky-light, and mantered in with Jack, as cool as a cucumber, as nurse put it.

"Well, I shall hoax a double fee out of your pockets, young gentlemen," said Dr. Grove at the end of it all.

And so he did, to the last farthing they had in the world.

"You see, 'tis a case of the biters bitten," laughed he, with a grave shake of his head. "A good thing it has proved no worse bite to you."

"And we could be down on you for 'contemptation' of the law of the land, but we won't," added one policeman; and the other one grunted—

"No, we won't."

Thus ended Kitty's birthday, and this was the outcome of Jack's and Will's bit of fun.

VIOLET'S LESSON.

BY L. P.

A BEAUTIFUL day in early summer: the leaves were coming out to welcome the sun, the birds were sitting on the branches looking at the leaves, and little Ethel was sitting listening to the birds, and enjoying the warm sunshine. So warm and genial was it, that she was seated on the grass intent upon a game of lawn-tennis which her brothers were playing.

She had finished her lessons for the day, and when she had done her work she would go out and pick up the tennis balls for her brothers, or watch them at the game. She got out earlier than Violet, who was sometimes lazy with her lessons, and that day she was rather cross. It is, no doubt, very silly to get out of temper because you do not know where the Gulf of Lyons is, or where is Fiji. Perhaps this was the reason why Violet got so fidgety, and finally threw her book on the floor in a pet.

"Very well, dear," said her governess, "you must remain here until you have learned your lesson."

"I can't learn it," replied Violet. "The day is so beautiful; I want to play tennis."

"You can't play tennis until you have learned your lesson in geography. There is the atlas; write down the answers to those questions, and then you can play."

"I will go and dress," retorted Violet, and, before the governess could interfere; Violet had quitted the room and gone upstairs. This was neither polite nor right, but I am afraid Violet was rather self-willed.

She went upstairs and changed her dress. She put on her lawn-tennis costume, her scarlet shade hat, and her pretty dress with a scarlet sash and short, open sleeves. Then, taking her racquet in her hand, she went downstairs, fully intending to get her book and read her lesson in the garden, after she had played lawn-tennis.

"It can't matter to Miss Moore when I learn my lessons," thought Violet. "I will learn all about that horrible Gulf of Lyons and the Fiji Islands this evening. Who cares for Lyons or Fiji?"

This was not the way to think about her task, a lesson which she had been told to learn that afternoon. But Violet thought just as I tell you, and went down into the schoolroom to find her tennis shoes.

She looked out of the window, and saw her brother and young Percy, a neighbor, playing lawn-tennis.

"I am coming down in a moment," cried Violet. "When I have got my shoes on I will join you."

"We don't want you," cried her brother. "Percy and I are having a set."

"But when your set is finished I can play, can't I?" pleaded Violet.

"We shall see," replied Bob, her brother, as he volleyed a ball back to his friend. "Ha! ha!" he exclaimed. "That's thirty—fifteen!"

"Thirty all, Bob," cried Percy in a minute. "That was my good service—eh?"

"First-rate," replied his friend. "Now, play!"

The game proceeded. Violet sat in the window, waiting, waiting, but they did not stop playing. She saw game after game, and they never asked her to play. At length, feeling very tired, and rather worried, she cried out—

"You are very disagreeable boys, both of you. There you play all day, and never give me a chance!"

"Oh, dear me!" cried her brother. "What's the matter?"

"I think you very unkind indeed, Bob—and Percy too. I have asked you time after time to let me play. I have asked you ten times at least, and you might do as I ask you. It isn't much, I'm sure!"

"I suppose you do what you are asked, don't you, Violet?" asked her brother, looking at her.

"I am sure I do," she replied; "and if any one asked me——"

She hesitated, stopped, and said no more. Bob called out "Play," and did not pay her any attention. Violet sat thinking, her racquet in her hand. Then she sat on the window-ledge, gazing at the great bowl of flowers, and never looking at the lawn-tennis at all. She was thinking about Miss Moore and the Gulf of Lyons.

"I suppose you always do as you are asked?" Bob had said. Did she? Did she even do what she was told—what it was her duty to do? Had not Miss Moore told her to learn her lesson, and she had refused rudely? And now she herself thought it unkind of her brother and Percy not to let her play at lawn-tennis! Was it not more unkind of her to refuse to do her lessons when she had been bidden?

"Yes," she said to herself. "I will find the Gulf, and pick out the Fiji Islands, and then I can go out and play properly."

So she put down her racquet, and got the atlas and her geography. Putting her hands over her ears, so as to keep the joyous cries of the players out of hearing, she plunged into "France," and in three minutes found the Gulf of Lyons.

"Why, there is the stupid place!" she cried. "Hurrah! I've found the Lyons, only they spell them with a 'y' in French. Now, where is this Fiji? Is it in the Atlantic Ocean, I wonder?"

She looked and looked. The geography did not help her, but she persevered with the atlas afterwards, and in ten minutes put her finger on the islands.

"There, you nasty little thing," she said aloud. "I have found you hiding yourselves away there. Fiji! Well, now I know you, and now I may go out. How stupid of me not to try at first. It was easy enough after all, and I got no good by being in a hurry."

"Well, Violet," inquired Miss Moore just then, as she came into the room, "have you disobeyed my orders?"

"No, Miss Moore," replied the girl blushing. "I was naughty and wanted to go out, so I dressed, but I am sorry. I have found out the Lyons and the Fiji Islands."

"The Gulf of Lyons, you mean. Lyons is a city."

"There it is," cried Violet. "Yes; and here are the islands, Miss Moore. I have found out other places too; and now may I go out?"

"Certainly, dear," replied her governess. "You have learned more than one lesson to-day, I think."

"Have I? I am very glad; and, indeed I will be good in future, and do as you tell me."

"That's a good girl," said Miss Moore, kissing her. "Listen; I think Bob is calling you."

He was. He had called many times, but they had not heard him. He called out again.

"Look here, Violet, can you come now? Why don't you do as you are asked? Percy is waiting for you to play."

"I will do as I am asked," she replied; "and I am glad I learned my lesson, Miss Moore. I can play now without any fear of the Fiji Islands. I'm coming, Percy."

Out she ran, and enjoyed her game. She had done her work, and her play was all the pleasanter. Is it not always so?

MARRIAGE AND BAPTISM.—It was formerly the custom in many parts of Scotland for the bride, immediately after the wedding, to walk round the church unattended by the bridegroom; and matrimony was avoided in the months of January and May. After a baptism the first food that the company tasted was cowdie, a mixture of meal and water, or meal and ale. Of this every person took three spoonfuls. The mother never set about any work until she had been kirked. In the Church of Scotland there is no ceremony observed on such occasions, but in this instance the woman, attended by some of her neighbors, entered the church, sometimes in service time, but oftener when it was empty, went out again, walked round it, and then returned home.

After baptism the father placed a basket filled with bread and cheese on the pot-hook that hung suspended over the fire in the middle of the room in which the company were, and the child was handed across the fire with the intent to frustrate all attempts of evil spirits or evil eyes. The custom appears to have been designed as a purification, and is analogous with that of the Israelites, who made their children pass through the fire to Moloch.

HOW MILK IS SOLD IN MEXICO.—The milk-cart is not much used in Mexico, but in place of it the Mexicans drive the cow into town and milk her where the market for milk is best. The scene at the milking-place is a peculiar one indeed. The calf is driven in with the cow, and, after it has coaxed the milk down, it is tied to the cow's neck, after which her hind feet and tail are securely tied together so that kicking, switching, or running away is impossible. The owner begins to milk, while all the girls are at his elbow, demanding their supply first. Though peculiar, this system has its merits, inasmuch as the article vended is entirely free from extraneous mixtures of water and chalk. Goats and donkeys are also milked.

Consume little time in regret.

IVY AND DUNGEON.

BY CHARLES MACKAY.

The ivy in a dungeon grew
Unfed by rain, unhoured by dew;
Its pallid leaflet only drank
Cave-moistures foul, and odors dank.

Not through the dungeon-grating high
There fell a sunbeam from the sky;
It slept upon the grateful floor
In silent gladness evermore.

The ivy felt a tremor shoot
Through all its fibres to the root;
It felt the light, it saw the ray,
It strove to blossom into day.

It grew, it crept, it pushed, it climb—
Long had the darkness been its home;
But well it knew, though veil'd in night,
The goodness and the joy of light.

Its clinging roots grew deep and strong;
Its stem expanded firm and long;
And in the currents of the air
Its tender branches flourished fair.

It reached the beam—it thrill'd, it curl'd—
It bless'd the warmth that cheers the world—
It rose towards the dungeon bars—
It look'd upon the sun and stars.

It felt the life of bursting spring,
It heard the happy sky-lark sing;
It caught the breath of morns and eves,
And wooed the swallow to its leaves.

By rains and dews, and sunshine fed,
Over the outer wall it spread;
And in the daybeam waving free,
It grew into a steadfast tree.

Upon that solitary place
Its verdure threw adorning grace;
The mating birds became its guests,
And sang its praises from their nests.

To every dungeon comes a ray
Of God's interminable day.
Wouldst thou know the moral of the rhyme?
Behold the heavenly light and climb!

CHARMS AND OMENS.

In India they have a peculiar charm for the discovery of a thief by means of chewing rice. Dr. Hayden says: "The secretion of saliva seems to be under the influence of the same mental emotions as affect the functions of the stomach. Fear, anxiety, and various other depressing passions, diminish digestion, and most probably produce this effect by stopping the secretion of gastric juice. Observation shows us that they have a decided influence in lessening, or even in entirely arresting, the secretion of saliva, a circumstance not unknown to the observant natives of the East."

In illustration of this, it may be mentioned that the conjurers in India often found upon this circumstance a mode of detecting theft among servants. When a robbery has been committed in the family, a conjurer is sent for, and great preparations are made. A few days are allowed to elapse before he commences his operations, for the purpose of allowing time for the restitution of the stolen property. If, however, it be not restored by the time fixed, he proceeds with his operations, one of which is as follows: He causes a quantity of boiled rice to be produced, of which all those suspected must eat. After masticating it for some time, he desires them all to spit it out upon certain leaves for the purpose of inspection and comparison.

He now examines this masticated rice very knowingly, and immediately points out the culprit, from observing that the rice which he has been masticating is perfectly dry, while that which was masticated by the others is moistened by the saliva.

The act of spitting on the hands, so often seen amongst laborers and working men before beginning a task, is, though not generally known, the remains of a charm. According to Pliny, spitting was superstitiously observed in averting witchcraft, and in giving a more vigorous blow to an enemy.

Hence we get the custom with prize-fighters, of spitting on their hands before they begin to fight. Boys, a few generations ago, used to "spit their faith" when required to make a promise; and when colliers combined to get their wages raised they used, before the days of trades unions, to spit on a stone together by way of cementing their union. When persons were of the same party, or agreed in their sentiments, there used at one time to be a popular saying that they had "spit on the same stone."

One of our popular sayings, "God save the mark," is an ancient charm, and is connected with an Irish superstition, that if a person in telling the story of some injury of limb or wound to another person should touch the corresponding part of his own or a bystander's body, he averts the owner of similar mischief by saying "God bless (or save) the mark," as a sort of charm.

In the far Highlands, superstition has a strong hold on the primitive people who inhabit that part of Great Britain. The county of Sutherland furnished a remarkable example of this superstition. It is said that in an unfrequented part of the country, near the foot of Strathnaver, lies a small loch, to which has been ascribed wonderful healing virtues. Its fame has spread far and wide in the northern counties, and pilgrimages are made to it from many remote districts of Sutherland, from the adjoining counties of Caithness and Ross, and even from Inverness and the Orkney Islands.

It is not known when the loch first came into repute with the sick, but it must have been when superstition had even a stronger hold in the country, and ignorance prevailed more among the people than now, for this belief in the mysterious curative power of the water can be traced back through several generations. The water and the leaves of a plant which grows in the loch are still used by the sick at their homes, but to derive the fullest benefit from these the patients must make a personal visit to the spot.

The word "Abracadabra," the name of one of the Syrian deities, was the foundation of the well-known mystic diamond charm that, as lately as a hundred years since, was considered infallible as a cure for certain ailments.

A paper inscribed with the charm and hung round the neck by a piece of silk, was regarded amongst the ancients as a direct invocation of the Syrian deity, and was recommended by Serenus Saronicus as an antidote against fever and all other diseases. Shortly before 1588 A. D., a quack doctor charged $150 for this prescription, and made his dupe, who was suffering from an acute attack of ague, much worse by inducing him to eat the charm instead of wearing it round his neck.

The charm of solemnly making an assertion and "crossing the breath," as it is called, is found among young boys in rural places. It consists of placing the hand on the mouth, breathing on it, and making the sign of the cross by drawing it from left to right across the heart. "If it be not so, I will cross my breath," means among boys an equivalent to "on my life." It is very common in this State.

Grains of Gold.

Sentiment is the shadow of the soul.

Most pleasure embraces us but to strangle.

Much that men get for nothing is dearly bought.

Perfection is attained by slow degrees; she requires the hand of time.

When pride and poverty have to shake hands, the meeting is a bitter one.

A man who is not ashamed of himself need not be ashamed of his early condition.

The worst prison is not of stone. It is of a throbbing heart outraged by an infamous life.

Those who know most are generally the best listeners and the most anxious to know more.

Whether happiness may come or not, we should try to prepare ourselves to do without it.

It is easier to say than to unsay what has been said. Therefore think well before you speak ill.

The chief cause of our misery is less the violence of our passions than the feebleness of our virtues.

Contentment is a good thing until it reaches the point where it sits in the shade and lets the weeds grow.

What is experience? A poor little hut constructed from the ruins of the palace of gold and marble called our illusions.

You find yourself refreshed by the presence of cheerful people. Why not make an earnest effort to confer that pleasure on others?

There are treasures laid up in heaven, treasures of charity, piety, temperance and soberness. These treasures a man takes with him beyond death when he leaves this world.

Let our reason, and not our senses, be the rule of our conduct, for reason will teach us to think wisely, to speak prudently, and to behave ourselves worthily upon all occasions.

We should hold fast to principles at all cost, and work directly in the line of our best ideals; thus not only will our consciences be clear and our characters pure, but our lives will be fruitful in the best results.

Femininities.

Colored lace handkerchiefs may be used on straw bonnets.

Breakfast caps are much affected by young married ladies.

A lady at Sanford, Fla., has 100 varieties of roses in her flower garden.

Andrew Carnegie, the Pittsburg millionaire gives his wife $50,000 a year for pin money.

Woman are employed on the staff of more than two hundred newspapers in the United States.

Mrs. Oaks, of Wheatland, Mich., has pared 1450 bushels of apples last winter, besides attending to her household work.

In the Alps: Guide—"If the ladies will only stop talking your honor may hear the roaring of the waterfall across the valley."

A Bradford woman was heard informing a neighbor that last night's storm frightened her so that she "shook like an ashpan."

The fashion in France of hanging beads on tombs has almost done away with the use of everlasting flowers, which was formerly so general.

If there is anything a woman cannot do besides throw a stone, it is to tell a conundrum without forgetting either the question or the answer.

Railway ticket-collector: "You surely don't expect those two boys to travel for one ticket, ma'am?" She: "Most decidedly I do. It's a twin."

A grand dinner in China includes a vast number of courses. Eighteen or twenty would be respectable, but the number may reach two hundred.

An Italian surgeon has vaccinated 150 women in the Sultan's Seraglio, but he saw none of them. An arm was thrust through a screen to him.

Put tea and coffee away in air-tight receptacles as soon as they are brought to the house. They lose much of their flavor by standing uncovered

A baby newspaper is the latest journalistic novelty. It is published every week, is printed on a toy printing press, and gives the nursery news of the town.

A poem is going the rounds, entitled "The Seven Ages of Women." It is intended to express the delicacy and tact with which a woman approaches this great subject.

"It commands," says a house-agent's advertisement of a "desirable residence," "not only a view of the pretty little railway station, but also of the people who miss the trains."

For caramels, take equal quantities of milk, sugar, chocolate and molasses, with a little butter, add an egg beaten, and boil half an hour. Pour on buttered pans and cut in squares.

A woman of Spartanburg, S. C., while carrying an arm load of wood, was attacked recently by a rabid dog, but, dropping a portion of her load, she pitched into the dog and killed him with a club.

Doormats made from scrap leather made into links and strung on metal wires are a novelty. The appearance of these mats is good, while they are at the same time flexible, durable and afford a firm footing.

Poisonous wounds made by spiders, centipedes and scorpions are treated in the same way as those made by insects, that is, by the direct application of hartshorn to the wound, and when necessary, internal stimulants.

Excessive rope jumping has already begun to send the little ones prematurely to their graves. The death of a girl in Pittsburgh last week was ascribed to it, as also is the precarious condition of another child in the same city.

It was once the fashion for ladies to wear miniature pigs about their persons. Now, chanticleer is apparently the favorite, and faithfully modelled "roosters" of all shapes and sizes form the fetish of fashionable women, who affect tiny silver birds as brooches and earrings.

Wash to perfume the breath: Cloves, bruised in a mortar, three teaspoonfuls; boiling water, one pint. Infuse for an hour in a covered vessel—exactly as in making tea—when cold, decant, or filter, through coarse muslin. Wash the mouth with it as often as may seem necessary.

It was at breakfast, and little Nelly, who was a regular chatterbox, had scarcely ceased talking. "Nelly dear," said her grandmamma, "you talk too much. You don't find me talking every minute." "No, gran'ma; but you know you've lived a good deal longer than I have, and have had time to get most of the talk out of you," answered Nelly.

"Oh, gracious, no!" exclaimed Mrs. Marrowfat to Mrs. Quonga, raising her hands and speaking in a very excited tone. "She was so ill when her new bonnet came home that she couldn't get up; but, dear sakes, Jane, that didn't matter nothing, for she just put that bonnet on, and lay with her head out of the front window the whole afternoon."

If the man be really the weaker vessel, and the rule is necessarily in the wife's hands, how is it then to be? To tell the truth, I believe that the really loving, good wife never finds it out. She keeps the glamour of love and loyalty between herself and her husband, and so infuses herself into him that the weakness never becomes apparent either to her or to him or to most lookers-on.

Miss Mary Harden, who died at Athens, Ga., last week and whose funeral took place there on Sunday, is said to have been the fiance of John Howard Payne, and the possessor of the original copy of "Home, Sweet Home," which was buried with her in accordance with her request, as it contained interlineations of affectionate sentiments that she did not want made public. Miss Harden was 78 years old.

A judge on circuit was recently holding court in a small city in Maine, when a man brought him a letter from a woman who had a divorce case pending, asking when her case would come on. The Judge, thinking the man appeared anxious, also, said to him jokingly, "I suppose you are going to marry her, ain't you, when she gets her divorce?" "Yes," replied the man candidly, "that's the calculation."

Masculinities.

Some men are born great, but they outgrow it.

Judge no man because the disposition of his mind is not like your own.

Mayor Hewitt earned his first money as a boy by reading aloud to a rich man.

Man is fickle. Even Adam, who had his wife made to order, found more or less fault with her.

When a man dies in the Society Islands they paint his body; in this country they paint his character.

The Czar of Russia has a photograph album containing pictures of all the men who have tried to kill him.

The cause of so many defeats in the battle of life is because men try to fight the ought-to-be's instead of the what-is army.

Husbands who leave property to their widows under the odious conditions that they do not marry again might as well not die at all.

Out in California there is a postmaster who is over seven feet high and weighs 280 pounds. There are never any complaints about his conduct of the office.

A Georgia lawyer complains that anybody who owns a copy of the Georgia Code, and can borrow six dollars, can gain admission to the Bar in that State.

Mother: "How do you like Mr. De Snoodle?" Daughter: "Oh, he's just lovely—such an educated man! I didn't understand half he was talking about."

Our resolutions seem to be vigorous as often as we reflect upon our past errors; but, alas! they are apt to fag again upon fresh temptations to the same things.

Marquis Tseng, the Chinese diplomatist, says that in China when a man values himself overmuch, they compare him to a rat falling into a scale and weighing itself.

Mount Vernon was named by Lawrence Washington, half brother of George Washington, who first owned it, after an English admiral, Vernon, whom he liked very much.

In conversation, learn, as near as you can, where the skill or excellence of any person lies; put him upon talking on the subject, observe what he says, keep it in your memory.

The secret of good talking is to have something to say, say it well, cut it short, and be ready to listen. The best talker who will not listen is a bore and a nuisance, and so the verdict is given against him every time.

Speak well of the absent whenever you have a suitable opportunity. Never speak ill of them, or of anybody, unless you are sure they deserve it, and unless it is necessary for their amendment, or the safety and benefit of others.

At the American Exhibition in London there is exhibited a fire-proof and water-proof villa composed entirely of straw. Every part of it from the foundations to the chimneys is of straw compressed to form artificial wood.

They played euchre. He was an old man. She was young. "Whenever you hold the right bower," he remarked in commencing, "your lover is thinking of you." Then he watched whenever she picked up the cards to see if she blushed or not. He won.

The musical kite of the Annamites in Tonkin furnishes a favorite amusement for both children and men. The kite is of peculiar construction, and has attached to it a reed pipe, into both ends of which the air rushes, producing a sound that is audible at a great distance.

Some thin men are always longing to grow fat, but they should profit by the experience of a Pennsylvania man who went to California some years ago for his health. On his return he was so fat that his wife refused to recognise him, and he has been obliged to sleep in the barn ever since.

Old men in Japan fly kites and spin tops, while children look on; Japanese books begin where ours end; Japanese writers use paint brushes, not pens, and write from top to bottom, from right to left; in Japan there are no lawyers; and Japanese doctors never make any charges or send in any bill.

"Oh, Miss Brown, who was that very homely young lady you were with this afternoon?" "That, sir? That was my sister." "Oh—ah—I—I beg ten thousand pardons. I ought to have noticed the great resemblance! That is—that is"—Then he wished an earthquake would happen right then and there.

President Cleveland says that the proper mode of addressing him is simply "Mr. President." Only two citizens of the United States have a legal right to any more high-sounding title. These are the Governor and Lieutenant-Governor of Massachusetts. The former is, "His Excellency," the latter "His Honor."

Young husband: "It does seem to me you might learn how to cook better than that. My mother—" Young wife: "There, that will do. On principle I refrain from learning how to cook." "Oh, you do—thinking of me, of course!" "No; of my son." "How?" "Yes; I don't intend he shall ever make any nice girl miserable by bragging about my cooking."

Little Dot (laughing)—"Why, Dick, what's the matter?" Little Dick—"I'm most dead. I just took some awful stuff." "That what your mamma put on the table?" "Yes; she left it there in a cup an' told me not to touch it 'cause it was for pudding, an' when she went out I took a great big swallow, an' it's castor oil." "Yes; she said you ought to take some, an' I told her how to fix it."

In old age one of the essentials to longer life is ample rest in bed. Sleep does not come as easily to elderly people as to those younger. If sufficient is denied, an opiate on retiring is justified, for at that period of life the continuous use of one such dose daily can, if needed, do little or no harm and promises to do much good. All over 60 years of age should pass at least eight hours in bed; after 70, nine hours; after 80, ten hours; and when the age of 90 is approached, more than half of every 24 hours should be passed in bed or reclining on a couch.

Recent Book Issues.

"Parodies" of the works of English and American authors is the best work of its kind published in the language. Issued at 190 Strand, London, England.

House-painters and others interested in paints, will find a great deal of value in "House-painting and Decorating," published at 1130 South Thirty-Fifth street, Philadelphia.

"The Interstate Readers," for Primary, Intermediate, and Grammar School classes, are filled with the best of reading and pictures. There could be nothing better for their purposes. Published at No. 30 Franklin street, Boston.

"Ticknor's Paper Series" is a happy idea, and will be very acceptable to all readers during the summer that is now so close upon us. It includes a number of the most famous and successful of the novels of the past five years—books like "Guenn," "The Story of a Country Town," "A Nameless Nobleman," and others. They are handsome and shapely volumes, substantially bound in decorated heavy paper covers. The series for 1887 will include thirteen volumes, appearing one each week during May, June and July. The retail price is fifty cents each volume. The initial number of the series is the famous and widely approved novel, "The Story of Margaret Kent." The wonderful success of this book is shown by the fact that within less than two years it has run through ten editions. Ticknor & Co., Publishers, Boston, Mass. The third number of the series is the brilliant new romance by G. de Montauban, entitled "The Cruise of a Woman Hater," and is filled with piquant and entertaining incidents and situations—the story of a woman-hating man trapped into a long voyage with a young widow, and the results. It is vivid, breezy and picturesque, and will be greatly enjoyed by thousands of readers this summer. A well-known Boston poet commends the work thus: "This is a capital story. The sea-life and the incidents of the voyage—the towing of the wreck, the captain and first officer's action concerning the wreck, the yellow fever, etc., being worthy of the author of 'The Wreck of the Grosvenor.'" Price, 50 cents.

FRESH PERIODICALS.

Our Little Ones and the Nursery for June is out, with its pretty summer reading and pictures for the ladies.

To all those interested in health matters, in their general bearing, we can highly commend *The Sanitarian Magazine*, published at No. 113 Fulton street, New York.

Appleton Morgan opens the June *Popular Science Monthly* with a second paper discussing the question, "Are Railroads Public Enemies?" An interesting sketch of Jules Jamin is given, whose spirited portrait forms the frontispiece of this number. The many other articles all maintain the high standard of this valuable monthly. D. Appleton & Co., New York.

Mr. Moncure D. Conway opens the June *Magazine of American History* with a brilliant leading paper on "Fredericksburg First and Last," illustrated. Mrs. Lamb, the editor, contributes a brief, well-written sketch of the American career of Major-General Robert Monckton, colonial governor of New York about 1762. Hon. Isaac T. Smith writes an interesting account of an old Boston "Historic Meeting-House," accompanied with a quaint picture made by him in 1823. Frank G. Carpenter furnishes a delightfully readable paper on "Our Presidents as Horsemen." Another June attraction is an entertaining description of the great artist, Jean Francois Millet. There is also an interesting paper on Sir Thomas Dale's "Indians in London," and a choice bit of "Revolutionary History," by Hon. J. O. Dykman. The several minor departments are admirably filled—they are unusually clever and bright. Published at 743 Broadway, New York city.

How Woodcock Woo.—Woodcock have certain peculiarities which endear them to the sportsman, as well as make them an interesting study to men of science. Their love-making is essentially their own. Early in the spring the male bird, seeking a mate, repairs to some well-known covert where the females most do congregate. It is just at sunset. All day long he has been filling himself full of long, luscious worms, and as nightfall has come, his bird thought turns to affairs more sentimental. When he reaches the parade ground, he looks anxiously around, and if no suspicious noise jars on his sensitive ears, he begins with a low, introductory overture. Then he grows impatient, and utters loud, guttural bleatings, clucking just before each one. Then he struts up and down the mossy bank, as if his performance gave him intense satisfaction. Then he considers himself fairly introduced, and, taking wings, rises in the air, flying up in spiral circles, each growing smaller as he ascends. During this flight he utters a low, sweet, cooing note. After sailing about in a series of aerial somersaults, he swoops down to the point of his starting. For hours he fools about, displaying his wing performances, until at last the female can no longer resist his antics, and approaches with ruffled feathers and dishevelled plumage. The two meet and caress each other with every evidence of affection, and all the by-play of love thrown in, and locking their long bills in each other's grasp, as if too happy for earth, they rise straight in the air, and fly far out of sight in the darkness.

Three Kisses.

BY S. K. C.

AN' is't true, Nora, beyant a doubt?"

"Quite true, Con. The young masther's writ the news to madam that he's to be wed at Michaelmas to an earl's daughter, no less, wid oceans of goold to her fortune. Hasn't he made the fine match of it?"

"Begorra and you're right there. It's the luck he's got. But talking of fine matches," said Con O'Moore, as he brushed his master's boots outside the kitchen door, while Nora Rooney rubbed the spoons not far away—"talking of fine matches, Nora, honey, didn't my great-grandfather throw away just the foinest chance you ever heard o'? And if he'd taken it, it isn't living at service I'd be, but in my own castle, with bags of goold and bundles of bank-notes to my hand; and, maybe, in this warm weather, my own man bringing me iced wine, the while I swore at him for not being speedier."

"What's that you're telling us now, Con O'Moore?" said Nora. "As if we were green enough to believe the loike of that."

"But, indade, you moight, then," said Con; "and, indade, you've believed more lies than I'll tell you, and my great-grandfather, the man it happened to, and he was a Connaught man, and a very handsome fellow, the loike of me, I'm tould; six feet in his boots with eyes no girl said 'No' to."

"Sure, the vanity of men!" said Nora quietly.

"Well, honey," said Con, "this same great-grandfather, by name Larry O'Moore, knew well enough his advantages, and he was in no hurry to marry. And it was thirty years old he was, when, being out walkin' one Christmas Eve a little farther from home than usual, he came to a funny looking lot of rocks: and taking a good look at them, what did he see but the opening of a cave. It was a dark-looking place; but he was a lad that didn't know what fear was, was my great-grandfather, Larry O'Moore. So into the cave he went, and before he'd gone far, it began to grow lighter; and, after awhile, lo and behold! instead of being in a cave he was in a garden with flowers and birds and fountains and green grass, and in the middle of just the prettiest castle you ever set your two eyes on, and the sun shining on all around just for all the world as if it was the middle of summer instid of deep winter. It was all very foine; but he knew by the look of it it was fairy land, and another man would have been frightened again, but, as I told you, there was no scare in Larry O'Moore; and what did he do but walk up to the door and knock on it wid his shillaly, and walk in without a 'by your leave;' and, to be sure, when he walked in, he just stood staring, for the sight he saw was one no man ever saw before.

"Right before him was a big pond of water with a marble brim to it, and it swam about the prettiest craythur. The head of her was a woman, with the prettiest goolden hair and black eyes, and cheeks like roses; and you never saw prettier arms than she had, and whiter hands or nicer shoulders; but all below her waist was the loike of a fish. A great goold fish, you might say, and she was swimming about in the pond like a salmon.

"'Come in, Larry,' she says, as soon as she caught sight of my great-grandfather. 'I've been expecting you all day. Come in.'

"So in he walked, making his manners, and says he—

"'I hope your ladyship finds herself quite cool and comfortable this warm afternoon.'

"'More than I loike,' says the fish-lady, with a sigh. 'Sit down a bit, Larry, and I'll tell you something. I'm a princess, Larry, and the wealth I have, the goold and jewels, is just past countin.'

"'Troth, it's aisy believing that by the foine diamond crown you have on your head, me lady,' says Larry.

"'Just look into some of these big coffers there,' says the lady. 'Lift the kivers and look in. You're no thafe, but you couldn't stale a guinea if you wanted to, for you'd be caught by five hundred little gnomes and chopped into mincemeat the minute you touched one. Lift the kivers and look in.'

"So Larry lifted the kivers, and the sight he saw was enough to make a miser crazy. Every wan av thim carved oak chests was full of silver and goold, rubies and emeralds and pearls, and splendors Larry didn't know the name of.

"'It's not a bullrush to all I have,' says the lady. 'I've lashings in all sorts; and the day I marry they'll all be me husband's.'

"'The gintleman gooldfish is in luck, me lady, whoever he may be,' says Larry.

"'I don't know who he'll be yet,' said the lady. 'Now listen, Larry, and I'll tell ye my story.

"'I was once a beautiful princess, but I was fool enough not to know when I was well off, and nothing would suit me but to take a peep into fairy-land. I knew the cave you came in by was the way there, and so one day I ran away from my court ladies, and in I crept; and, sure, a beautiful place it was, and illigant enough for an angel. So I called all the lords and dukes, and the loike of them, and I had me a palace built, and here we lived in luxury. And the pond you see me in was our bathroom, where I and the rest of the great ladies used to bathe.

"'And we used to laugh and dance and say, "A fig for all the fairies on the earth; they can't hurt us." But little we knew what we were saying. The fairies were mad enough with us. And what did they do but creep into the palace one night, and bewitch the water of the bath; and when I rose from my bed at the break of day to take my dip, oh, the terrible thing that happened! I was changed to the loike you see me now; and all my ladies into frogs or lizards, or tiny bits of fish. Sure,' says the poor craythur, 'me heart is broke wid it intirely.'

"'And isn't there any way ye can get changed back again?' says my great-grandfather.

"'Just wan,' says the lady, 'just wan. I'll tell you what it is. If you'll give me three kisses, it won't be two minutes after it before I am a beautiful princess again. And I'll marry you and make you a prince and we'll go back to the decent parts of the world to live, and you'll have all that hear can wish ever after.'

"'Sure I'll do it,' says my great-grandfather, 'and glad to do it, too.'

"And with that the fish-lady swam up to the edge of the pond, and he stoops over her and gives her first wan kiss, then another; but before he gave her the third, the thought that all mightn't be right came into his mind.

"'Just kape them two,' says he to the lady, 'and I'll go and ask Father Mooney about it, and come back to give ye the other. He's a knowledgeable person, is the father, and if there's devilry in this he'll tell me.'

"Oh, wurrah! The shriek the craythur gave and the way she clung to him! But he just soused her under the water, and off he went, a thousand little devils afther him. And crash came something, and the next he knew he was lying in the snow forninst his own cabin, with his dudeen in his mouth and a black bottle in one hand, a shillelah in the other, and Father Mooney preachin' a lecture on temperance over him, and remarkin' to the boys that was lookin' at him that they could see what a pint drink would bring a foine fellow to.

"'Not a drop have I had this day,' says me great-grandfather; but the idea had got into their heads, and they only laughed at him; and the next day, when he went into the woods again, to find the cave, makin' up his mind to give the other kiss, it was clane gone, and search as he might he niver found it again. And now you see it isn't a bit of a lie I'm telling you when I say that if my great-grandfather hadn't been a fool I'd have been living in illigance this day, instead of blackin' these boots.

"And maybe," added Con, picking up the boots as he spoke, "it's a princess you'd have been wan day, if you'd said 'yes' when I axed ye."

THE FAITH OF INDIA.

IT is said that in some sections of the United States people are beginning to secretly adopt the Hindoo religion. It is, therefore, worth while to investigate what this is.

The Hindoo acknowledges one Supreme Being as the ground and foundation of his religion. One God, and beside him no other—this sentence is become a proverb, and is in the mouth of every Brahmin. His writings dignify this supreme and eternal Being with the title "Brahm," which is to be carefully distinguished from Brahma, an emanation of the former, and the first person in the Hindoo trinity.

The Shasters, or Hindoo Bible, describe Brahm as a being without beginning and without end, almighty, omniscient, unchangeable.

Brahm is represented without mind, without will, without consciousness of his existence. No wonder that many Hindoos, in going one step farther, declare the Supreme is nothing; for a spirit without power and energy is like a thing of nought. Nevertheless, it is asserted on the other hand, that he enjoys the highest beatitude—it is the bliss of deep, uninterrupted sleep.

Brahm, however, must one day have awaked from his long sleep. This was necessary for calling the world into existence. On this important point, the different philosophical systems, headed by their respective leaders, have carried on an never-ceasing warfare.

Brahm awoke, say the Vedas, another of their Bibles, and, feeling desire arising, said—

"Let me be many!"

Forthwith he took upon himself a material form; and henceforth he is like a spider, sitting in the centre spinning out his interminable threads, and fastening what he produces from himself to the right and left—towards all quarters of the infinite vacuum.

Here, then, the shell of Hindooism begins to open; the creation of the world, according to its teaching, is nothing more or less than a manifestation of Brahm in visible material forms. It is the most perfect system of pantheism.

The cosmogony of the Shasters runs thus: All the germs or seed corns of the world that was to come into existence were condensed in the shape of an egg, and the supreme took possession of it in the form of Brahma.

One year of the creation, or one thousand jugs, which according to our reckoning, makes three hundred millions of common years, elapsed before the egg was hatched. During that long period, it was swimming like a bubble upon the mighty deep of chaos; its brightness resembled that of a thousand suns.

At last it broke, and Brahma sprang forth. His appearance was terrific; he had a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, and a thousand arms—a suitable complement to undertake the work of creation.

Another monstrous being escaped from the egg with him, evidently signifying the crude materials from which the great mundane machine was to be prepared. The hairs of this monster were the trees and plants of the forests, his head the clouds, his beard the lightning, his breath the atmosphere, his voice the thunder, his eyes the sun and moon, his nails the rocks, his bones the mountains of the earth.

When the egg was fabricated, Brahm, as creator, retired from the scene; and henceforth he troubled himself no longer with the concerns of the world. He relapsed into his former sleep, and nothing will disturb him in his dreams until the time when the dissolution of the present universe is to awaken him to renewed activity.

No temple in India is consecrated to this "unknown God." The reason of this is obvious—the Hindoo expects nothing, fears nothing, hopes nothing from a god who is asleep, wrapped up in sweet dreams, and who has communicated a power to those who are now managing the government of the world as his delegates.

When the great egg opened, it brought forth, likewise, the three worlds, viz., the uppermost, which is inhabited by the gods, the middle, intended for the dwelling-place of man, and the infernal world, destined to be the habitation of demons and all sorts of fearful beings.

In the centre of the vast plain of the earth, which is two hundred and fifty thousand miles in diameter, the loftiest of all mountains, Sumeru, rises to the enormous height of more than two hundred thousand miles. It is crowned with three golden summits, which are the favorite residences of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, the Hindoo Trinity.

At the foot of this mountain there are three smaller hills, placed like sentinels, on the top of each of which grows the mango tree, above two thousand miles in height. These trees bear a fruit as delicious as nectar, which measures several hundred feet in diameter.

When it falls to the ground, juice exudes from it, whose spicy fragrance perfumes the air, and those who eat thereof diffuse a most agreeable smell for many miles around them.

The rose-apple tree is likewise growing on those hills, the fruit of which is as large as an elephant, and so full of juice that at the season of maturity it flows along in a stream, and whatever it touches in its course is changed into the purest gold.

Distinction of caste is traced in its origin to the creation of man. By successive emanations from himself, Brahma called various classes of mankind into existence. First the Brahmin escaped from his mouth, as the representative of God in human form.

The nature of his birth signified him to be, not only the highest and most exalted of all human beings, but likewise the intended teacher, and the mediator between the gods and mankind.

From the arm of Brahma, the defence of the body, sprung the Kshutryu, or the caste of warriors; the object of whose creation was evident, from the nature of his birth; he was to protect the people by his powerful arm, and to shield and defend his brethren against the aggression and oppression of the wicked.

From Brahma's breast issued the Voishnu, or caste of merchants and tradesmen, to provide for the necessities of mankind.

And from the humblest member, his foot, came the despised Sudra, or the servile caste. Their allotted task was to perform every kind of menial labor for their nobler born brethren, both at home and in the field.

The Sudras constitute by far the greatest number of inhabitants of Bengal; and probably it is the same in other parts of India. For thirty centuries past have those unhappy beings groaned under the curse of the haughty Brahmin, and patiently borne the intolerable burden.

"What God has appointed," say they, "we cannot alter."

So holy and unchangeable in this institution of castes, in the eyes of the people, and so firm is the belief of the Hindoo as to the appointment being of divine authority, that a transition from one caste to the other is absolutely impossible.

A prince cannot purchase the Brahminical thread which is the badge of their dignity, for millions. As a mouse can never be changed into an elephant, nor the thorn-bush into an orange tree, so neither can a Sudra be turned into a Brahmin.

The Fat and the Lean.—It is generally supposed that fat people have much more blood than others. On the contrary, they have less. The blood they have, moreover, is really poor, while the fat fills the space which is required even for the circulation of that. Fat people have, then, less vital energy than the thin, not possessing sufficient blood to bring every organ up to its full working power, and the fat hindering what blood there is from flowing freely enough to the organs especially at the moment of action requiring it. Besides all this, the fat obstructs the play of the lungs, so that sufficient air cannot be inhaled to purify the blood; the natural and necessary combustion is thus so interfered with that the functions of the body are hindered. It follows that too much exertion should always be guarded against in people of large and fatty development, and too much should never be expected of them.

That sort of half sigh which is accompanied by two or three slight nods of the head is pity's small change in general society.

Humorous.

MAN AND HIS SHOES.

How much a man is like his shoes!
For instance, both have a soul to lose;
Both have been tanned, both been made tight
By cobblers; both get left and right.

Both need a mate to be complete;
And both are made to go on feet;
They both need heeling, oft are sold,
And both in time will turn to mould.

With shoes the last is first; with men
The first shall be the last; and when
The shoes wear out they're mended new—
When men wear out, they're men dead too!

Both have their ties, and both incline,
When polished, to the world to shine;
And both peg out. Now would you choose
To be a man or be his shoes?

—U. N. NONS.

Bad habits—Seedy coats.

Well trained—Railway employes.

All played out—Open air concerts.

The whirl of society—A round dance.

The height of fashion—The latest ladies' bonnets.

When is water not water?—When it is dripping.

What insects do lawn-tennis players resemble?—Grasshoppers.

Isn't it singular that the product of the still should make men so noisy?

What did the spider do when he came out of the ark?—He took a fly and went home.

There is any amount of good reading in the dictionary, but it is distributed in a very tantalizing manner.

The man who lives on little is worshipped as an economist, while he who lives on nothing is despised as a tramp.

"You ought to be proud of your trade," said the customer to the barber; "most of it is head-work, you know."

Argument for marriage with a deceased wife's sister—A man would thus be enabled to avoid having more than one mother-in-law.

The man who fell off the fence into the brambles was much nettled by the occurrence. "We hope thistle be appreciated," says a punster.

"It is really very odd, my dear," said an old lady, one very hot day, to a friend; "I can't bear the heat in summer, and in winter I love it."

In the wilds of Borneo the thirsty cannibal throws a knife, sticks a man and drinks his blood; in Boston the thirsty tramp throws dice, sticks his friend and drinks beer.

Miss Blank, to her cousin, who has inadvertently admired her foot: "Yes, papa thinks so much of my foot that while we were in Italy he tried his best to persuade me to have a bust made of it."

"Grandpa," said Teddy, as the old gentleman woke up from a loud sounding after-dinner nap, "if you'd give your nose a spoonful of paregoric, don't you think you could put it to sleep also."

When Barnum heard that among the Pope's Easter gifts was an ivory egg, lined with quilted satin and inclosing a ruby and several diamonds, he cabled over to his representative in Rome to buy the hen at any price.

A public reader says he has committed to memory more than 200,000 verses of poetry. We should regret his death, of course, but it seems a pity to lose the chance of getting so much rhyme out of the world at one fell swoop.

"No," said a fond mother, speaking proudly of her 25-year-old daughter—"no, Mary isn't old enough to marry yet. She cries whenever any one scolds her; and until she becomes hardened enough to reply vigorously she isn't fit for a wife."

In a prohibition town in Maine some visitors went into a store kept by a German woman and called for whiskey. She said she could not sell any, and then whispered to one of them, "Ven you vants fiskey you must call for vine, and pinch mit von eye."

"Humph! but you are wearing your father's hat," he said, as he looked over the fence at the other boy. "I know it," was the reply. "Hey! but you are ashamed." "Not much I ain't. A feller who can't make use of his father hadn't orter have one."

Said Brown to Fogg, who had been indulging in some of his vagaries: "Excuse my mentioning it, but now that we are alone, let me remind you that there are always a fool and a critic in every company." "Two is small company," replied Fogg; "but why do you call me a critic?"

Life insurance agent, filling up application: "Your general health is good, is it not?" Applicant: "Never had a day's illness in my life." Agent: "Um! You do not contemplate entering upon any hazardous undertaking, I suppose?" Applicant: "Well, yes; I am rather afraid that I do. I am going to get married next week."

Lord Beaconsfield received a deputation once of which the late Charles Reade, the novelist, was a member. When Reade rose to speak, his lordship said: "Pray be seated, Mr. Reade." "I would rather stand, my lord," was the reply; "I can make a longer speech when standing than I can when sitting." "I am very sorry to hear it," was the Premier's comment.

"If I'd been little George Washington I'd have lied about cutting the cherry tree," he said, as he laid down his school history. "You would!" exclaimed the mother. "And why?" "Well, then it would have been laid to the hired man." "And then?" "And then there'd have been the all-fiercest fight between him and old man Washington anybody ever saw! Little George was way off on that cherry tree business."

CREELING THE GROOM.

Of all the curious marriage customs that have been handed down to posterity as having been indulged in, perhaps one of the most curious is that which at one time (not very far distant) prevailed in Scotland to an almost universal degree, and from the manner in which it was carried out was called "Creeling the bridegroom." How, or when, or where it first originated is lost completely in the mists of obscurity.

The mode of procedure in the village of Galashiels was as follows: Early in the day after the marriage, those interested in the proceeding assembled at the house of the newly-wedded couple, bringing with them a "creel" or basket, which they filled with stones.

The young husband, on being brought to the door, had the creel firmly fixed to his back, and with it in this position had to run the round of the town, or at least the chief portion of it, followed by a number of men to see that he did not drop his burden; the only condition on which he was allowed to do so being that his wife should come after him and kiss him.

As relief depended altogether upon the wife, it would sometimes happen that the husband did not need to run more than a few yards; but when she was more than ordinarily bashful, or wished to have a little sport at the expense of her lord and master—which it may be supposed would not unfrequently be the case—he had to carry his load a considerable distance.

This custom was very strictly enforced, and the person who was last creeled had charge of the ceremony, and he was naturally anxious that no one should escape. The practice, as far as Galashiels was concerned, came to an end about one hundred years ago, with the person of a man who, on the ostensible plea of a "sore back," lay abed all the day after his marriage, and obstinately refused to get up and be creeled.

He had, it may be added in extenuation, been twice married before, and had on each occasion gone through the ceremony of being creeled, and now, no doubt, felt that he had had quite enough of creeling.

PRINCELY STRATEGY.—Once, when visiting a small town in one of the smallest German States, the sovereign prince was received at the gate by twenty young damsels in white. As a piece of cunning strategy, the ten prettiest maidens were placed in the front rank and the ten less pretty ones in the second. Charmed with attractive appearance of the vanguard, his serene highness did what comported itself well with his sixty years and his princely dignity—he kissed every one of them on their beautiful foreheads. At the end of the front rank he made a sudden pause—only for a couple of seconds however: then he beckoned to his adjutant: "Sparrenholz, here—go on with the rest."

It is a good thing for a young man to be "knocked about in the world," though his soft-hearted parents may not think so. All youths, or, if not all, certainly nineteen-twentieths of the sum-total, enter life with a surplusage of self-conceit. The sooner they are relieved of it the better. If, in measuring themselves with wiser and older men than they are, they discover that it is unwarranted, and get rid of it gracefully of their own accord, well and good; if not, it is desirable for their own sakes that it be knocked out of them.

WHEN Robert Southey, the poet, was in Lisbon, he saw his countrymen conducting themselves in the true spirit of commerce. One merchant told him how closely he attended to profits. "I never pay a porter," said he, "for bringing a burden till the next day; for while the fellow feels his back ache with the weight, he charges high; but when he comes the next day the feeling is gone and he asks only half the money." The author of this mean trick was worth one million dollars.

A COQUETTE is a young lady of more beauty than sense; more accomplishments than learning; more charms of person than graces of mind; more admirers than friends; more fools for attendants than wise men.

A TRAMP, recently arrested in Jackson, Mich., for disorderly conduct, was found to have a capacious wallet in his inside pocket, stuffed full of two-cent postage stamps. He confessed that he had been making a tour of the State, begging a stamp from every person he met, on the plea of wishing to send a letter to his wife. When a stamp was not forthcoming he usually got two coppers or a nickel to buy one with, and was able to live in comfort on his revenue.

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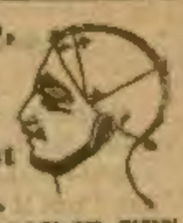

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Latest Fashion Phases.

"And ye shall walk in silk attire, and siller ha' to spare," sounds so pleasant. I cannot make any promises as to the "siller," but if you want to be in the fashion you certainly must adopt silk attire; and this is made quite easy by very tempting materials. Still, at some of our best houses I have been shown combinations of silk and wool.

One of many quite beautiful gowns I saw the other day was an attractive mixture of that new and favorite tone, Gobelines with beige. Gobelines is blue, gray, and green all blended together, the blue predominating.

I have seen it in some of the most priceless Sevres vases and hardly anywhere else. It was a happy inspiration to have adapted it to the requirements of dress. It will be one of the dominant tones of the present season.

In the gown I am describing, its soft beauty was enhanced by the richness of the silk, which was thick, but supple. The petticoat appeared to be of the beige woollen fabric, but at the back you only caught a glimpse of it beneath the long, plain falling folds of the skirt; in the front it formed most of the lower portion of the breadth, the join between silk and wool being hidden by a galon of finely wrought passementerie, the foundation cord of the two tones, and on this tiny flowers in relief of their natural colorings.

If I were to tell you that polonaises are to be once more the fashion, I am afraid that you would run away with the idea that they are to be universal. This is by no means the case; they will be worn as yet only in dresses made by the leading dressmakers, and with all the skill of which they are capable. In such hands they are really distingue.

Imagine a long, full skirt composed entirely of lace, "relief brode," very fine and covered all over with a pattern which, in the particular example I am describing was an inch-sized check, with a floret in the centre of each. Peeping beneath it was a pinked-out edge of stone-colored silk; over it was worn a polonaise, striped Gobelines, and stone of the finest poplin, a pompadour floral design on the stone stripe. The bodice was long, and was draped to form a point, soft pleats of the lace on either side hiding the fastening.

It was intended for a tall and a graceful figure—a gown you could not help remarking; thoroughly uncommon, and yet in no sense voyante.

The best dressmakers would appear to be using only materials which drape well, and however rich and thick, the silk must be supple. Never was more art displayed in the amalgamation of colors. They are faint in tone, though strong contrasts, deftly managed, are allowed, such as grass-green and heliotrope.

Bluish grays never seem to lose their fashion. A pretty gown in gray cloth was straightly draped over long panels, formed of pleats of white cloth edged with broad cream braid; there was just the suspicion of a panier at the waist made of the gray cloth, for paniers are a leading point in fashions.

You see them on all the best dresses, and in the long draperies which prevail there are slight attempts at catching the material up in most unexpected places, as though the hand had been pushed under and a pin inserted, making unconventional pleats across, and the effect is good. I note this is most done at the sides of the front breadth.

Another style of arrangement you should take note of is that often in the front of the dress there is a large box-pleat 9 inches broad at least, and that the side breadths which fall on to the back breadth are left unattached and free, being of course so lined that they present a good appearance if they fly up. This gives a graceful flow and fall.

A beautiful dress, made in this way, was of the lightest and most delicate peach, covered with a brocade of large leaves. It was all of one tone, and showed no admixture of material. I notice that this is a style which is likely to be very well worn.

If you were to ask me the most fashionable dinner gown you could order for the season, I should say fleur de peche brocade, or a Louis XVI. brocade having a stone ground, with floral sprays in natural coloring, lined and interdraped with some faint tint in the flowers—tender green, pink, or peach.

There is another revived arrangement of skirts that it is well to remember in arranging spring and summer dresses, viz., that the front breadth is often put in full with tiny gathers. It is most becoming in striped dresses.

A good, handsome, durable class of black silk is what everyone wants. A dress of this was made with a long trained perfectly plain back—long dresses are de rigueur for dinner wear—with side paniers, the front covered with pendent bead tassels, one end of it brought on to the left shoulder of the bodice.

This same idea was carried out on an emerald green velvet, which had side panel pleats made of an Indian shawl, and from one a corner was brought up on to the bodice.

I am going maybe to declare what seems to be a contradiction, viz., that the most fashionable women of the day follow no particular fashions; they create them for themselves, always, no doubt, with a due regard to certain leading ideas in prevailing modes.

I saw a beautiful dinner gown, which embodies what I mean; it was made in a most fashionable material, viz., in pale peach brocade, the skirt long, full, and plain, with no trimming whatever or drapery. It was gathered on to a slightly pointed bodice, laced in front, with a little fine old blonde creamy white turning down from the neck.

The sleeves formed just one long puff from the shoulder to the elbow, like the Stuarts wore. There was nothing fashionable about the gown but the material, and yet the wearer would be deemed a well-dressed woman everywhere.

There are a few people that dress well who wear no stays, and they may be glad to hear how they may nevertheless ensure a good fit. This is done by having a shaped band to the skirt 4 or 5 inches deep, well boned. Attached to this are ribbon braces, which relieve the weight from the hips. There is none of the compression attributed to stays, and yet the waist is kept within its appointed limits.

Many dresses show handwork in the trimming. A black one, for example, draped with striped silk and gauze, had each stripe bordered with black cut beads half an inch apart, sewn on by hand. There were satin panels to this skirt with just one gathering, a quarter of a yard from the hem, so that it spread out a like fan. The bodice was edged around the neck and basque with triplets of beads, all hand-sewn, and threaded on China ribbon.

Low bodices—the real round bodice—are more the fashion than any other, and can be worn now on occasions where of late years it would have been considered too full dress.

Many of these are bordered with beads, and have narrow flat pleats meeting in the centre, tapering towards the point—a style most becoming to thin figures.

The most stylish way of wearing lace inside a bodice—for what, in old-fashioned parlance, was called a "modestie"—is fan-shape, gathered close at the edge and widening out on the bust. This is becoming.

A beautiful gown made of a full rich tone, after the Gobelines order, was trimmed with a panel of gold and silver embroidery. It had been deftly made with large gold and silver drops falling from the panels and the V-shaped bodice. No tone could have harmonized better with the gold and silver than this deep green, which is so akin to blue.

Foulards are so much in favor that the lady who does not possess a single foulard costume cannot flatter herself that she is in the fashion.

They are made in every variety of pattern—striped, checked, and strewn with small spots and figures. Foulards drape so well, and are so very becoming to both face and figure, that they well deserve their popularity.

In Paris ladies are wearing very smart little jackets of dark blue or beige cloth fitting nicely at the waist, and with tails exactly like those of a gentleman's coat. There is a very small V at the throat, the lapels of which fall back naturally without being pressed by an iron, and this shows a waistcoat of stamped velvet in two tones of the same color as the jacket, sprinkled with blue or grenat flowers. This is a most useful garment to wear with the skirt of a dress the bodice of which is worn out or old-fashioned, and is suitable for town or country.

Odds and Ends.

THE MAKING OF ENTREES.

On former occasions I have called attention to the fact that as a rule ladies take more interest in the preparation of sweets than in what may be called the more essential part of a dinner, viz., soup, fish, entrees, joints, and game.

We probably all of us know houses at which we visit where we can depend upon finding everything arranged to perfection so far as mere appearances go. The cloth will be properly laid, the table will be ornamented with flowers, fruit and ice, in the arrangement of which probably as much good taste has been displayed as is seen in the toilettes of the ladies themselves.

We must, however, remember that true hospitality consists in gratifying not only the sense of sight and smell, but the sense of taste in relation to the palate.

Good fruit and flowers, ices and creams are no excuse for soup like ditch-water, over-boiled fish, greasy entrees, half-cold joints, and game which was rather overdone about the time the soup was served. On the present occasion I will confine myself to that part of the dinner known as the entrees.

Now, with many persons who are fond of good living, but who are not blessed with robust appetites, very often the entree course is the chief part of their meal. Ladies, not being compelled to cook, very often interfere for the sake of amusement; and I would remind these ladies of how great a treat they could give, at any rate to the male portion of their guests, if they would exercise their superior sense of taste in every sense of the word, and confine their attention to the entrees rather than the sweets. By way of encouragement, I can assure them that there is probably more scope for the exhibition of taste in ornamenting entrees than in any other part of the dinner.

I will illustrate what I mean by ornamenting entrees, by giving a case in point. First, we will suppose the dish to be that very common one, *Tete de veau en tortue*. We all know this dish to be composed of calf's head served in a rich brown gravy, with mushrooms, fried eggs, olives, and on great occasions, truffles. The dish is always popular, and is easy to make. Very much, however, depends on the appearance of dishes, and I will therefore describe how to ornament it.

Probably the dish has been made from a calf's head. Remove the brains immediately the head is sent home, and throw them into cold water, slightly acidulated with vinegar. This assists in cleaning the brains and also helps to make them look whiter after they are boiled. The half-head must be boiled till it is quite tender, and the liquor in which it is boiled must be reduced to assist in making the gravy. Next get a few small round red ripe tomatoes, the smaller the better, the largest not being bigger than a bagatelle ball. These tomatoes should be placed in a small tin with a little butter in the oven to cook through, care being taken that they do not break. The brains after being boiled should be formed into little round white lumps the same size as the tomatoes; a black truffle should be picked out and cut into thin slices about the size of a quarter; the red tomatoes and white brains should be placed alternately round the base of the dish, and the small pieces of black truffle should be neatly pressed into each little white ball of brains. The ear should stand up in the middle of the dish, and should be made to look like fresh French polished mahogany by means of a little bright glaze. This bright glaze is very easily made. In adding mushrooms to the dish, I of course presume the cook has used a tin of mushrooms. Some of the largest of these should have been put by to ornament the dish. They should be kept hot, but at the last moment before the dish is sent to table, the tops of these mushrooms should be dipped in the same glaze that was used for the ear. We have now for ornamenting purposes the command of the three colors, red, white and black. To these we may add the color green. Stoned French olives are used in making the dish, and there is no harm in adding a little fresh bright green parsley, if the parsley is properly fried and not over-cooked or burnt up, with a little ingenuity, the sprigs may be stuck in the stoned olive, the stalk going into the empty place where the stone had been.

I think that this dish is a very good illustration of a large class of entrees dependent upon that great base in cooking, good brown gravy.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

WEEDS multiply very rapidly. The number of seeds each plant is capable of producing is estimated as follows: Dandelion, 12,000; shepherd's purse, 37,000; pepper grass, 18,000; wheat thief, 7,000; common thistle, 65,000; chamomile, 16,000; ragweed, 5,000; butter weed, 5,000; purslain, 388,000; plantain, 44,000, and burdock, 43,000.

REMEMBER that the greatest enemy a plant can have is another plant of the same kind growing by it side, as both feed on the same material. Remove the weaker plants and leave the stronger. One good plant will yield more than two plants under unfavorable conditions.

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IVY.—You should prune your ivy in the early summer, before the sap commences to run up. All the old wood should be cut out, so that the young shoots will have plenty of room and air and the full strength of the mother plant.

B. BROWN.—The population of the world is estimated at 1,500 millions, of whom 240 millions are Christians, about 420 millions Buddhists, and 200 millions Mohammedans. Brahminism comes next with 180 millions.

ANXIOUS.—A short-sighted man would be of no good for shooting unless he took to glasses. Your sight may be "strong," but if you wish to have the focal distance altered you must have yourself fitted with spectacles.

G. HARRIS.—The best way to strengthen the voice is to use it gradually and carefully under proper supervision. We should be inclined to say that you would derive more good from a few good singing lessons than from swallowing all the remedies in the Pharmacopoeia.

YOUNG.—Ascertain the size of the young lady's finger by means of another ring; then you need not trouble her to go to the jeweler's with you to purchase the engagement ring. So young a lover ought to know that for a lady to go through the operation of fitting on the ring is, perhaps, a crowded shop would be an experience the reverse of agreeable.

W. B.—The following freezing mixtures can be used instead of ice: 1. Sal ammoniac 10 ozs., nitre 10 ozs., and water 32 ozs. 2. Sulphate of soda 8 parts and hydrochloric acid 5 parts. 3. Sulphate of soda 16 parts, nitrate ammonia 13 parts, and diluted nitric acid 5 parts. The mixture to be frozen should be put into a thin vessel, and all the materials—basins, spoons, etc.—should be thoroughly cooled before use; this is important.

STUDENT.—A sanitary inspector is one who looks after the sanitation of a community, and is usually a public officer, although the term may also be applied to those agents of sanitary societies who are employed to examine the sanitary arrangements of houses. A sanitary engineer is one who has to do with the construction of drainage works, etc. In neither case is there any fixed salary; it varies with the abilities of the individual, as in other professions.

W. A. G.—The royal family of Holland derives its name from a small principality which was ceded to France in 1713. It is in the department of Vaucluse, and the chief town, also called Orange, is about fifteen miles north of Avignon, and has a population of some 7000. The eldest son of the King of the Netherlands would, if there were one, be styled the Prince of Orange. From William III. of England, who was from Holland, comes the name Orangeman.

DELLA.—At twenty you need not feel awfully old. On the contrary, we regard twenty as comparatively youthful. Nor do we consider the look-out for the future by any means a black one. Dismiss the cadaverous-looking young man forthwith. Assume a more conciliatory attitude towards the cruel wretches, try to be as kind and courteous as possible, and you will probably find your "nice large dark eyes" will do quite sufficient execution. Even the most Christian young man will hardly fall in love with you if you persist in telling them that you hate the sight of them.

G. F. A.—As gold in its pure state would be too soft for manufacturing purposes, it is necessary to alloy with it some coarser metal, mostly copper. But the metal mixed is of less value than when pure; and as the public would have no means of knowing its intrinsic value, the Government make it necessary that every article manufactured should bear a certain mark stating the proportion of gold. In England articles are taken to the Goldsmith's Company and tested by them, the proportion of gold being stamped on the article. This is called the "hall" mark. Standard gold is twenty-two carat, and the lowest passed by the hall is nine carat.

W. MASON.—A collection of dried flowers and grasses involves very considerable care. Gather them when they are just ripe, and press them between thick absorbent blotting-paper, or between specially prepared botanical paper, which any good stationer would procure for you. After twenty-four hours have elapsed, take out and press between fresh paper, placing a heavy weight on the top. This process may be repeated until you are satisfied that all the sap has been expelled. Then mount your specimens, using a transparent cement, such as glue crystal; and afterwards varnish over lightly with thin copal. Beginners will succeed most readily with simple flowers, such as the primrose, buttercup, celandine, etc., which lend themselves most readily to flat treatment, and with ferns of every description.

RECITE.—The Curfew Bell is supposed to have been introduced by William II., and was, in all probability, intended as a precaution against fire, since at that time most of the houses were built of wood. At eight o'clock in the winter and sunset in summer, a bell was rung in every town and village, when all fires and lights had to be put out. This custom was not received with favor by the English, although at that period it was customary throughout Europe. 2. Feudalism is, in its most general sense, defined by an organisation of society based on land tenure. It is applied to a system which prevailed in Europe, and was at its height at the time of the Crusades. The king, or ruler of the country, was in the habit of granting lands out of his own vast estates to his various nobles, on condition that in time of war they should rally round him with a certain number of men.

GRATEFUL.—You might derive some little benefit from the lessons; but your defect seems to be rather wandering attention than bad memory, and, in so far as you suffer from the latter, it probably arises from the former. You must look for remedy, therefore, to your own resolution. Determine that during a given time—at first you need not make it long—you will think about nothing but what you are reading; and allow nothing to move you from your resolve. It will take you some time to cure yourself of your tendency to wander, but if you persevere you will succeed. In recommending to you this discipline, we assume that there is nothing wrong with your health. Should the "sensation" of which you speak develop into pain, you had better take medical advice. As to your "backwardness" when you are out, the best counsel we can give you is to think as little of yourself as possible.